This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

Memoirs of the life and writings of William Hayley, esq

William Hayley, John Johnson, National Art Library (Great Britain).
Forster Collection, National Art Library (Great Britain). Dyce Collection

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Hayla

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Hayley

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

MEMOIRS

OF THE

LIFE AND WRITINGS

OF

WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

THE FRIEND AND BIOGRAPHER OF

COWPER.

4

Digitized by Google

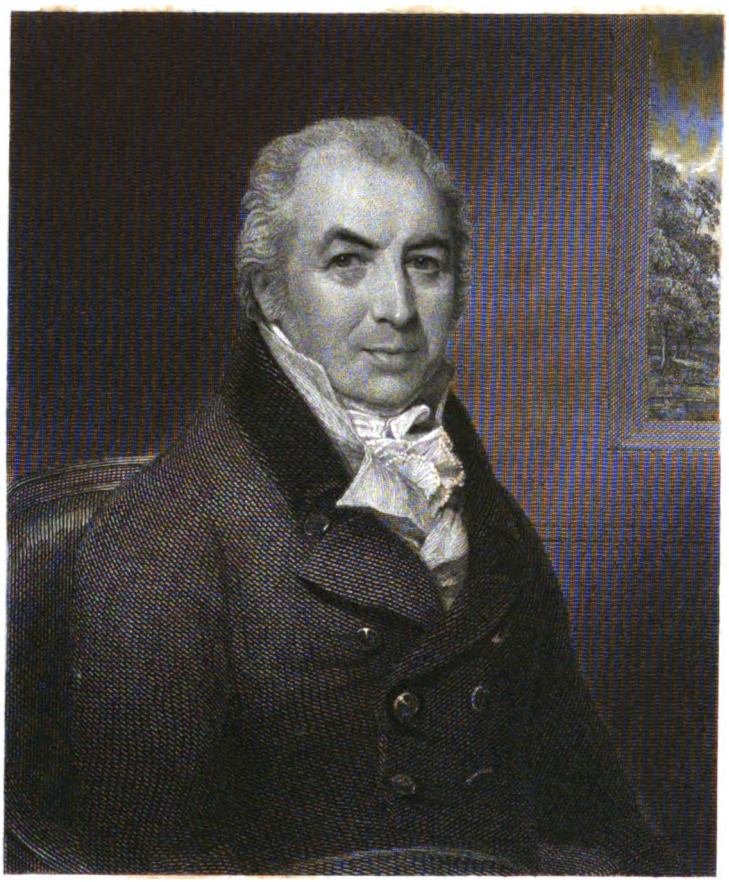
LONDON:
PRINTED BY W. CLOWES, NORTHUMBERLAND-COURT, STRAND.

Digitized by Google

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY

ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS.

Digitized by Google



Engraved by S. Cooper *From a Painting by Englehart*

WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

London Published by Henry Colburn & Co. and Simpkin & Marshall April 20, 1821

Digitized by Google

MEMOIRS

OF THE

LIFE AND WRITINGS

OF

WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

THE FRIEND AND BIOGRAPHER OF

COWPER,

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

WITH EXTRACTS FROM HIS

PRIVATE CORRESPONDENCE

AND UNPUBLISHED POETRY.

AND

MEMOIRS OF HIS SON

THOMAS ALPHONSO HAYLEY,

THE YOUNG SCULPTOR.

EDITED BY JOHN JOHNSON, LL.D.

RECTOR OF YAXHAM WITH WELBORNE, IN NORFOLK.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

ASTOR LIBRARY 1876 NEW-YORK

NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR HENRY COLBURN AND CO. CONDUIT-STREET,

AND SIMPKIN AND MARSHALL, STATIONERS-HALL-COURT.

1823.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

THE LORD HOLLAND,

THIS MEMOIR OF THE POET HAYLEY,

WHO WAS DISTINGUISHED BY HIS LORDSHIP'S ESTIMATION,

AND EQUALLY GRATIFIED BY HIS KINDNESS,

IS,

WITH AFFECTIONATE SOLICITUDE FOR HIS

POSTHUMOUS CELEBRITY,

RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED

BY

HIS LORDSHIP'S

MOST OBLIGED AND

MOST OBEDIENT SERVANT,

THE EDITOR.

Digitized by Google

Preparing for Publication, uniformly with his Life by Hayley,

PRIVATE CORRESPONDENCE

OF

WILLIAM COWPER, ESQ.

NOW FIRST PUBLISHED FROM THE ORIGINALS, EDITED BY HIS KINSMAN,

JOHN JOHNSON, LL.D.

RECTOR OF YAXHAM WITH WELBORNE, IN NORFOLK.

**** Being desirous of rendering this work as perfect as possible, the Editor will feel obliged by the Communication of such Letters as his friends may possess, addressed to him at the Publishers'.

Digitized by Google

PREFACE.

The Author of the following Work is so well known by his various compositions, and especially by his "Life of Cowper," that if an anecdote connected with the delivery of it to the public was not too remarkable to be omitted, a preface might be dispensed with, on the present occasion.

The anecdote is this.—In consequence of an arrangement with his publisher, a condition of which was that this Work should be delivered for the Press on the Author's decease, a very considerable annuity was secured to him during the last twelve years of his life; a fact which it would seem a sort of violence to the history of literature to withhold, especially as the forming and fulfilling of such an arrangement, with all its contingencies, must be considered as highly creditable to the parties.

The Editor takes this opportunity of adding, that, in concluding the Life of Hayley, he has been induced to insert a selection of letters, which the Author addressed to himself; the work appearing to stand in need of some elucidation at the periods to which they refer: a measure which he was the more inclined to adopt, as no letters of the author to his other friends, had the rapidity of the Press allowed him to assemble

Digitized by Google

them, would have been likely to answer that purpose. He has also abstracted some passages from the Memoir, which, if an opportunity of advising had been afforded him, he is persuaded the Author would himself have omitted. In other respects, the work is printed, verbatim, from the copy left by Mr. Hayley in his own hand-writing; and, it is hoped, will recommend itself to the more intimate friends of the Author, and to the friends, indeed, of literature in general, as possessing the advantages that are usually identified with the stamp and interest of auto-biography.

Yaxham Parsonage,
May 22, 1823.

Digitized by Google

CONTENTS

OF

THE FIRST VOLUME.

BOOK THE FIRST.

Page.

CHAPTER I.

Introduction—Family of Hayley - - - - - - 1

CHAPTER II.

From the birth and infancy of William Hayley to the decease of his father - 8

CHAPTER III.

The education of William Hayley previous to his being sent to Eton - - 14

CHAPTER IV.

From the entrance of Hayley at Eton to his being sent to his first residence in Cambridge - - - - - - - - 26

BOOK THE SECOND.

FROM HAYLEY'S FIRST RESIDENCE IN CAMBRIDGE TO THE PERIOD OF HIS QUITTING THE UNIVERSITY.

CHAPTER I.

Academical friends - - - - - - - 39

CHAPTER II.

Occupations in College - - - - - - - 44

CHAPTER III.

Prospects in life - - - - - - - 50

Digitized by Google

BOOK THE THIRD.

FROM THE TIME OF HAYLEY'S LEAVING COLLEGE TO HIS ESTABLISHMENT AT EARTHAM.

CHAPTER I.

Page.

Residence in Queen-street and excursion to Scotland - - - 55

CHAPTER II.

Compositions in 1767, love elegies, and a brief political essay in prose - 65

CHAPTER III.

The family of Page - - - - - - - 71

CHAPTER IV.

On the first considerable literary projects of Hayley - - - 79

CHAPTER V.

The second attachment of the Poet, that leads to his marriage - - 83

BOOK THE FOURTH.

CHAPTER I.

Various incidents and compositions in the three first years after the marriage of the Poet—Death of William Hayley's father - - - - 101

CHAPTER II.

Occasional compositions - - - - - - - 111

CHAPTER III.

Ocular sufferings—Visit in Derbyshire—New Verses—Visit to Ford Abbey—Acquaintance with Wm. Pitt, at Lyme—Preparations to settle at Eartham 121

BOOK THE FIFTH.

FROM HAYLEY'S FIRST ESTABLISHMENT AT EARTHAM, TO THE PERIOD OF HIS FIRST PUBLICATION.

CHAPTER I.

Thornton's regret on his friend's removal from London—illness, death, and epitaph of Mary Hayley, the mother of the Poet - - - 133

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER II.

Page.
Occasional verses of Thornton and of Hayley - - - - 140

CHAPTER III.

Affliction in the decline and death of Hayley's old friend Mr. Steele, the Recorder - - - - - - - - 151

CHAPTER IV.

Visits to London, Derby, Lincolnshire, Herts, and Southampton, in 1776 - 155

CHAPTER V.

Incidents and poetical compositions in the years 1777 and 1778 - - 162

BOOK THE SIXTH.

CONTAINING A PERIOD OF FOUR YEARS, 1779, 1780, 1781, 1782.

CHAPTER I.

Occurrences and compositions in 1779, and the death of Thornton in the commencement of the next year - - - - - 181

CHAPTER II.

Occurrences and compositions in 1780 - - - 198

CHAPTER III.

Extracts from Letters to and from Mrs. Hayley, during her residence at Bath, in the early part of 1781 - - - - - 210

CHAPTER IV.

Containing various occurrences and extracts from letters to the end of 1781 - 241

CHAPTER V.

Occurrences, poems, and letters, of the year 1782 - - - 253

BOOK THE SEVENTH.

CHAPTER I.

Occurrences and compositions of 1783 - - - - - 287

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER II.

Page.
Occurrences and compositions in 1784 - - - - - 311

CHAPTER III.

Serious illness in 1785, and various compositions and occurrences of that year 334

CHAPTER IV.

Of unsuccessful endeavours to counteract the calamitous pressure of connubial infelicity—The various occurrences of 1786 - - - - 339

CHAPTER V.

From the commencement of the year 1787, to the establishment of Mrs. Hayley, in Derby - - - - - - - 350

BOOK THE EIGHTH.

FROM THE SETTLEMENT OF MRS. HAYLEY, AT DERBY, IN 1789, TO HER DECEASE AT LONDON, IN 1797.

CHAPTER I.

Various occurrences and compositions in the residue of the year 1789, and in 1790 - - - - - - - - 385

CHAPTER II.

Occurrences and compositions of the years 1791 and 1792 - - - 410

CHAPTER III.

Occurrences of the years 1793 and 1794 - - - - - 443

CHAPTER IV.

Occurrences and compositions in the years 1795 and 1796 - - - 466

CHAPTER V.

Studies and events in the year 1797 - - - - 477

Digitized by Google

MEMOIRS

OF

WILLIAM HAYLEY.

BOOK THE FIRST.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.—FAMILY OF HAYLEY.

The life of a sequestered student, fond of books and privacy, in all the periods of his existence, seems, at first, to offer materials for nothing more than a short and simple history; but incidents, very singular in themselves, and productive of consequences no less extraordinary, befel the subject of this Memoir; and though ever devoted to retirement himself, he had so much intercourse with many, the most memorable characters of his time, that a fair and full account of him must inevitably be a work of considerable extent and diversity. This idea led to a division of it into Books and Chapters, each book terminating with some remarkable event; the first, for example, with the entrance of the young poet in that university, to whose tribute of public gratulation, on the birth of the Prince of Wales, he contributed an English Ode, before he began his first residence in college.

Digitized by Google

The present Memoir will include some anecdotes of several literary characters; but it must not be forgotten, that its main purpose is to delineate, with the utmost fidelity, the conduct and character of WILLIAM HAYLEY, as an author and as a man. The writer is not conscious of any desire to varnish his failings, or to exaggerate his merits. It is, therefore, hoped, that the memorialist will ever be found a faithful recorder of truth, and one who, in acknowledging his own failings, has duly paid that indispensable attention, which every writer owes to the interests of virtue.

William Hayley, the Poet and Biographer, was the grandson of Thomas Hayley, Dean of Chichester. It is remarkable, that two brothers of this name, William, and Thomas Hayley, were both deans of the same cathedral. Thomas, the younger of the two, and the immediate ancestor of the poet, had only one son, who was educated at Exeter College, in Oxford, and discovered very promising abilities; but as he expected a considerable fortune from his parents, and had early settled himself in marriage with the comely daughter and heiress of an opulent merchant, he engaged in no profession; but lived as a private gentleman in the city of Chichester, and in a house which formed a part of the fortune of his first and most wealthy wife, whose maiden name was Baker. This lady dying early, without issue, left her husband sufficiently affluent to disregard the article of fortune in his second marriage, and he addressed another of his beautiful countrywomen, who had every attraction except that of wealth.

Digitized by Google

As this lady became in due time the mother of the poet, and as she was a mother, of whose tenderness and virtue her son has spoken, both in prose and rhyme, with the highest degree of filial love and veneration, the reader may wish to find a full and faithful account of her. Perhaps no female had ever a juster title to the affectionate labours of a biographer. Her son was so much impressed with this idea, that he once began a sketch of her life and character; but he quitted his prose, to speak of her in poetry with a fonder enthusiasm, and certainly made but a slight progress in that projected biography. His account of the parent whom he loved so justly, is comprised in a manuscript of a few pages, and ends abruptly with the marriage to which he owed his existence. I select from it the following particulars concerning the early life of this memorable lady.

"Mary, the wife of Thomas Hayley, was the eldest daughter of Colonel Yates, a gentleman of extensive landed property, near Horsham, in Sussex. He had changed his residence from that part of the county to the city of Chichester, which he represented in parliament. He had also chosen a wife from that neighbourhood, having married Margaret, the eldest daughter of Sir John Miller, of Lavant, a lady of singular beauty. She gave birth to three daughters, and a son who died at the early age of six years. Though Colonel Yates was possessed of an ample fortune, with a disposition and with talents to shine in public, a contested election and a variety of vexations led him into habits of improvident expense, which rendered his latter days peculiarly afflicted; though, in his early life, no man could have appeared

Digitized by Google

in parliament with a fairer prospect before him. For Onslow, long distinguished as the speaker of the commons, has been heard to declare, that he knew him well, and remembered him one of the most promising young members of parliament.

But however promising the early days of Colonel Yates might appear, his prospect was soon clouded; and at the time when his eldest daughter had attained the age of woman, his fortune was deplorably reduced. She was born in the year 1718, and educated, with her two sisters, under the care of her mother. When she was in the full bloom of beauty, her parents allowed her to embrace a plan of life, very agreeable to her wish of cultivating her mind, by residing with a sister of her mother, the wife of Dr. Gooch, the Bishop of Ely, who took continual pleasure in forming the character of his young and engaging niece. This bishop of Ely was a prelate who might have said, with the Cardinal de Retz, that he had "l'âme peut-être la moins ecclesiastique qui fut dans l'univers."

Though he had been engaged in the academical squabbles of Cambridge, and pronounced, as vice-chancellor, the memorable sentence of degradation against Doctor Bentley, he was much more distinguished by elegance of manners than by depth of erudition. As nature had given him an uncommon share of genuine sportive wit, he was fond of displaying it to the most worthy audience, and his house was frequented by the most refined and polite society of that time.

The change of scene, from a country town to the London residence of this social Prelate, was, in many respects, delightful

Digitized by Google

to his niece; yet even here, she was exposed to some domestic mortifications of the most galling nature. She suffered as much from the penuriousness of her aunt, as she had before endured from the distresses of her father.

Though the charms both of her person and of her mind, seemed to render her the delight of every society in which she appeared, she was often reduced to the humiliating necessity of feigning indisposition, and of keeping her chamber, by the absolute want of the most ordinary articles of dress. As she was naturally of an elevated spirit, she conceived an idea of freeing herself from these mortifications, and of relieving the exigences of her parents, by an exertion of talents, which might reasonably inspire the hope of their being rewarded by affluence; she had almost determined to assume a fictitious name, and appear upon the Stage. Had she executed this project, we may at least affirm, that the stage would have been a considerable gainer, for she possessed almost every requisite to form theatrical perfection. Her person was tall and graceful; her countenance united, in a singular degree, the most attractive expressions of tenderness and majesty. Her voice was equally happy; she read with uncommon propriety and spirit: perhaps there never existed a woman, who entered more feelingly into the soul of Shakspeare. But that honest pride, which had first suggested the idea of a project so little suited to her birth and station, suggested also the many reasons that might be urged against it; and her mind was soon relieved from so painful a debate, by an incident which seemed to open a more pleasing prospect: a splendid offer of marriage. Thomas Hayley,

Digitized by Google

who now appeared as her lover, was a gentleman of an agreeable person, engaging manners, and independent fortune. He had a benevolent heart, with a very active mind, and there was something so frank, and so noble, in his nature, that the most experienced and cautious friends of the lady whom he courted, very earnestly conjured her not to slight his addresses: for she observed, on this occasion, that although she was flattered by the offer, though she admired and esteemed her lover, she dreaded the extreme generosity of his temper, and his expensive amusements; h e was afraid that their connexion, instead of alleviating, as her friends imagined, would only aggravate and increase the miseries of her family: she trembled at the idea of being surrounded by children as necessitous as herself. Such serious and painful reflections had the distresses of her parents awakened in the mind of a young and sprightly woman, whose disposition was naturally sanguine, and whose heart was a perfect stranger to avarice. But the warm protestations of a lover, and the concurring assurances of many friends, soon induced her to hope that the influence of her beauty and understanding would correct this foible in her future husband. She was prevailed on to promise him her hand, on a condition very seldom exacted by a young and beautiful bride; namely, that he should diminish instead of increasing his equipage, a circumstance, the more extraordinary, as the lady who requested the sacrifice was very far from being an enemy to splendour.

Indeed, she was so formed to delight in elegance, by the endowments of her person and her mind, that she might easily have

Digitized by Google

shared that propensity to expensive indulgences, which was among the failings of her father and of her husband, had she not constantly checked and subdued it, through the whole course of her life, by the nobler emotions of filial duty, of connubial tenderness, and of maternal anxiety and affection.

The day for her nuptials was appointed; when an incident occurred peculiarly calculated to fill the heart of each party with the most cruel apprehensions. The destined bride was taken ill, with every symptom of that horrid disease, which, before the practice of inoculation, was so justly dreaded as the bane of beauty. Her lover attended her with the most endearing solicitude, and endeavoured to banish the very natural terrors she expressed on perceiving her complaint, by protestations of the purest love. The agonies of apprehension, which he must have felt on the occasion, were happily repaid, by the delight of seeing her pass uninjured through a disorder, which has so frequently disfigured the most lovely of her sex. On the first appearance of her malady, she was removed from Ely House in London, to a lodging on Richmond Hill; and she was soon released from her confinement without any diminution of her beauty. Her marriage was solemnized in the year 1740. The new-married couple fixed their residence in their native city of Chichester.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER II.

FROM THE BIRTH AND INFANCY OF WILLIAM HAYLEY, TO THE DECEASE OF HIS FATHER.

The biographical fragment in which her son William had commenced an affectionate history of his mother, terminated abruptly in the words that close the last chapter. It is remarkable, that in the various eulogies, by which he attempted to celebrate this admirable parent, both in prose and rhyme, he could never satisfy his own feelings, by rendering his tribute to her merits, perfectly proportioned to his deep sense of all that he owed to her maternal excellence.

In the present narrative, it is hoped that the character of this severely tried and highly deserving parent, will be as fully and faithfully delineated as that of her filial eulogist.

I should pass, like other biographers, very lightly over the years of the poet's childhood, were not his infancy distinguished by many striking circumstances, which had probably a great influence on his character and compositions. That I may not, however, injure his elder brother, I am bound to inform my readers, that the first offspring of the marriage I have just mentioned, was a very promising boy, who received his father's name (Thomas), in the year 1743. The poet, who inherited,

Digitized by Google

from his great uncle, the name of William, was born in Chichester, on the 29th of October (old style), 1745.

He has often said, that he began to have obligations, in the very first week of his existence, to the magnanimity of his mother. He happened to arrive in the world when the city that gave him birth was full of terror and perturbation. In the rebellion of 1745, the French were expected to land on the coast of Sussex: the inhabitants united in military associations, and Mr. Hayley, the father of the poet, took a very active and honourable part in raising a company, called "the Chichester Blues," for the defence of his native city. His exertions, on that occasion, were so considerable, that the Duke of Newcastle wrote him a polite letter, in praise of his patriotic zeal, and offered him, from government, the title of a baronet, as a reward for his services; a reward which, with a laudable mixture of modesty and prudence, he chose to decline. Just as the active and genuine patriot was enlivened by the birth of his second son, intelligence arrived, that the French had actually landed at Pevensey, and were marching to Chichester. In the first emotion of connubial and paternal tenderness and anxiety, he proposed to transport his wife and new-born infant to Portsmouth, as a place of greater security; but she rejected the proposal with the spirit of a Roman matron; "I have too much confidence," said the lady, "in the humanity of our enemies, to think it possible for them to injure a woman in my situation; I will not therefore hazard the life of my infant, by a precipitate flight from invaders, who may never, perhaps, arrive at this place, and who, if arrived

Digitized by Google

here already, would certainly not destroy either my child or me." Her husband permitted her to remain in her chamber, and admired her fortitude.

The kind father, who had shown such tender solicitude for the safety of his new-born boy, soon exposed the life of the same boy to more formidable jeopardy, from a motive which, for the interests of nature, ought never to be mentioned without serious reprehension. He delighted in the acknowledged beauty of his wife, and entertained an apprehension, that by nursing the infant, she must inevitably injure the delicacy of her frame. Hence, he commanded her to consign the little William to a hired nurse. Strong as her natural feelings were, she thought it her duty to obey her husband; little suspecting, that such obedience would be very near destroying the nursling she resigned. By a fraud not uncommon among venal nurses, the person procured on this occasion was so deficient in the vital treasure, in which she had pretended to abound, that her charge was nearly starved to death, before the source of his decline was discovered. The anecdote is mentioned, as it may serve to enforce the eloquent admonitions, which Rousseau, and Mr. Roscoe (in translating the Italian poem of Tansillo,) have given to young mothers; and because it is also remarkable, as the first of many hair-breadth escapes of life, to which the infant William was destined in his mortal career.

The city of Chichester soon recovered from the alarm occasioned by the rumour of an approaching enemy; but some evils arose, from this expected invasion, which particularly

Digitized by Google

affected the family of the poet. His father, in supporting the military character, which he had assumed with great spirit, was led into considerable expense, and into habits of festive gaiety, that proved highly pernicious, both to his fortune, and his health. He confided too much in the natural strength of a fine constitution, and, after passing great part of the night in social hilarity, instead of taking a due proportion of sleep, he would prepare himself for the occupations of the succeeding day, by plunging into a cold bath in his garden. By repetitions of this imprudence, he brought on himself a severe complaint in the lungs, and a premature decay. His lovely wife was now surrounded by evils, which she had ineffectually foretold, as all her tender admonitions were unable to avert them. To aggravate her misfortunes, her eldest son was attacked by an alarming fever, and she was reduced to one of the severest trials, that Providence can inflict upon an anxious parent. She was obliged to desert a sick child, to attend a declining husband to Bristol. His physicians had ordered him to try the Hot Wells, though with very little hope of success. He lingered there a few weeks, and expired in the prime of life. By his own particular desire, he was buried at his favourite village, Eartham, in Sussex.

In that sequestered spot, peculiarly embellished by nature, he had purchased a small estate, and the ruins of a mansion, that belonged to a strange fantastic mortal, "Sir Robert Fagg;" whose preposterous ambition, in offering himself a candidate for the county, is recorded in this verse of Branstone,

"And poll two voices, like Sir Robert Fagg."

Digitized by Google

Branstone was a Sussex poet, of most lively talents, and, as Dr. Johnson honoured him so far as to quote him in his Dictionary, it is rather surprising that he did not introduce him in the selection of English poetry, which that colossal critic superintended. But to return to the neglected mansion of the whimsical Sir Robert. Mr. Hayley soon removed the ruinous building he had purchased in 1743, and formed on a higher spot of ground, a diminutive villa, as a kind of summer-house, to which he occasionally sent his children, from his residence in Chichester, for the benefit of a finer air.

This little establishment, which was censured as an idle act of extravagance, proved, in process of time, a singular source of health and delight to that son who alone was destined to preserve his name and memory upon earth. But of this favourite scene, so abundantly enlarged and embellished by the poet, we shall have frequent occasion to speak in the course of this narrative. At present it may be sufficient to notice it only as affording a peaceful grave to the first of the Hayleys, who delighted in the spot, and whose remains were deposited in a vault, near the centre of Eartham church-yard, in 1748.

Let us terminate the chapter with a few remarks on those striking qualities that formed the lights and shades of his character. He was a man of a cheerful and active spirit, benevolent and generous; but being, at an early age, too affluent to require the aid of any laborious profession, he seems to have wasted on a variety of petty pursuits, such talents as might have raised him to distinction, had he exerted them with steadiness

Digitized by Google

and perseverance in the cultivation of any favourite art or science. His common-place books are proofs of extensive reading. He was enough of a musician to compose a country dance; and enough of a poet to translate a sportive ode of Horace into spirited English verse: but I believe he attempted nothing higher, either in music or poetry. He had a passion for sculpture, painting, and architecture: and at the time of his decease, he had begun to construct a very singular additional apartment to his house in Chichester; so singular, that many who surveyed it in its unfinished state were puzzled to guess the intention of the contriver. His son conjectured, with some probability, that the design of his father was to form a diminutive representation of the Sancta Sophia, at Constantinople. He was so inclined to amuse himself with Turkish ideas, that one of his portraits appears in a turban. The picture alluded to was painted by one of that ingenious and amiable family of artists, the Smiths of Chichester, to whom he was a kind and useful patron. There is another and a superior resemblance of him, painted by the celebrated Roquet, in enamel. They both prove the expressive comeliness of his person: the enamel was richly decorated with diamonds, as a present to his lovely bride, the mother of the poet, who being a mere infant when he lost his father, could have no personal recollection of his character; yet he was often inclined to meditate with pleasure on those endearing parts of it which he collected from that inestimable parent, to whom he repeatedly owed the preservation of his own life, and from whom he had long the happiness of receiving instruction and delight.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER III.

THE EDUCATION OF WILLIAM HAYLEY, PREVIOUS TO HIS BEING SENT TO ETON.

The infant William was in petticoats when he lost his father; and his disposition was so little inclined to mourning, that, according to an anecdote related by his nurse, he cut off from his infantine dress the occasional black riband, and absolutely rejected a leading string of so gloomy a colour. Too young to understand the misfortune of losing a father, his first tears of cordial affliction were probably shed for the loss of a brother; for the vault which was formed to receive the remains of Mr. Hayley, in 1748, received also those of his eldest son, in the course of two years; a child of singular promise, in the beauty of his person and the dawn of his intellectual powers. He fell an early victim to the recent and imperfect practice of inoculation. His younger brother, William, might, perhaps, have shared the same fate, had not the precaution of a benevolent guardian, (Mr. John Murray, a banker of London,) suggested to the mother of the two boys that it would be wrong for so tender and anxious a parent to hazard the lives of her two children at once. The fate of the eldest preserved the younger from peril.

The lately flourishing house of Hayley was now reduced to an

Digitized by Google

afflicted widow, and a single infant of five years. He was at that time, indeed, in the highest bloom of health, but soon destined to pass through a series of sufferings as singular, perhaps, as ever sickness inflicted on the human frame; but these sufferings originated in a school at Kingston. Before we conduct him to that scene, where his life was in the utmost danger, it seems proper to notice those rudiments of learning which the future author received in his native county. His earliest school was a school of young ladies, in Chichester. It was kept by three sisters, whose name was Russell. He often related with pleasure, that he received from the youngest of the three, whose name was Philadelphia, a bright silver penny, as a reward for reading well; and it is a singular fact, that, in his sixty-third year, he had the pleasure of presenting to this lady, still conducting a school with cheerful health and perfect faculties, a recent edition of his *Triumphs of Temper*, printed at Chichester, as a memorial of his gratitude and regard towards the venerable teacher of his infancy.

His first acquaintance with the Latin Grammar was formed in his native city, but under a master, whose own scholarship appeared so unpromising, that the mother of the young orphan soon wished for his removal. She herself retired from Chichester, to watch over the education of her only remaining child. Residing, herself, in London, she placed the little William at a small school, but of considerable reputation, in Kingston. The name of the master, was Woodeson, and he had the honour of reckoning, among his young scholars, two singular persons,

Digitized by Google

who rose, as they advanced in life, to great literary distinction; Steevens, the editor of Shakspeare, and Gibbon, the historian; both friends and correspondents of Hayley, though not his cotemporaries in their school. The only incident, which the latter recollected, of a scene that proved so unfavourable to his learning and his health, was an impression made on his heart, in the first evening that he passed in Kingston. On the departure of his mother, her child, who was most tenderly attached to her, instead of joining any young play-fellows, sat himself down under a tree alone, to indulge the feelings of desolation that reigned in his bosom, by a shower of tears. While he was thus overwhelmed by a burst of filial tenderness, a young lady, the daughter of his master, came to cheer and caress the little weeping stranger. The sweetness of her compassion was not entirely effaced from his memory, though an infectious fever, which raged soon afterwards in the school, destroyed some of the scholars, and threatened worse than death to the faculties of Hayley. It has been affirmed, that the well-meaning, but misguided wife of the schoolmaster, had a dangerous propensity to dabble in medicine, and thought herself perfectly able, with the aid of an ignorant apothecary, to manage the most formidable disorders. Hence, she was apt to conceal or misrepresent the illness of the children, from an unwillingness to alarm their parents. The mother of Hayley, on being told that her son had a very slight indisposition, sent an intelligent and trusty man-servant, to bring her an exact account of the state in which he found the child. This honest and affectionate messenger, whose name was William Fowler,

Digitized by Google

said on returning to his mistress, that she must not only visit the sick child herself, but must carry a physician with her, or she would have little chance of preserving his life. The astonished and afflicted parent hastened, with the celebrated Dr. Heberden and the nurse of her little William, to Kingston. She found there an amazing and hideous spectacle indeed; a boy, who had suffered so much from mismanagement, that it seemed impossible to restore, or to remove him. Dr. Heberden, before he left the house, spoke to his nurse in private, and said to her, "My good woman, to relieve the anxiety of your mistress, I have promised her to see this child again to-morrow; but I will honestly say to you, my opinion is, that the child cannot be alive so long: indeed you can hardly wish him to live. Now what I have to beg of you, is, (as I cannot leave London to-morrow without the utmost inconvenience,) to send me an early messenger in the morning, if this poor little sufferer expires, as I think he must, in the night." The nurse, hardly less afflicted than the mother, yet promised the physician to act as he desired; she had however, the comfort of seeing him again, in the same house, not only on the morrow, but for days and weeks, while the mother and herself continued to watch, in the chamber of the sick, over their little wreck of a human being. His condition, by mismanagement, was become so deplorable, that a truly humane physician thought it his duty to say to the afflicted parent, still sanguine in the hope of her child's recovery, "My dear madam, we must not too fondly expect to save, nay, we should hardly wish to save, this poor little sufferer; for if we had the power to keep

Digitized by Google

him alive, which is almost impossible, I am greatly apprehensive that he could be nothing in life, but a cripple and an idiot." The extraordinary circumstances, which induced a very sensible and compassionate man, so to caution a fond parent, against lamenting too intensely the expected death of the child she idolized, were these. The little patient had suffered to such a degree, from the severity of his illness, and some neglect, that he was not only emaciated, and reduced to the most alarming weakness, but three of his *vertebræ* were absolutely dislocated, and, by this circumstance his mental faculties seemed to be utterly destroyed. The magnanimity of his mother was not overwhelmed by a spectacle so distressing. She endeavoured to animate the desponding physician to her own sublime confidence in the mercy of God, and declared her cordial persuasion, that he would graciously grant both the life, and the suspended senses of her child, to the fervency of her prayers, if she faithfully discharged all the duties of a parent.

This, indeed, she did, through a length and severity of trial, that ensured to her the love and admiration of all who were witnesses of her maternal virtue: and at last she had the delight of hearing that virtue, most gratefully, though inadequately, acknowledged, and recorded by the recovered son, whom she watched, with indescribable tenderness and fortitude, through the years in which he was destined to suffer a calamitous suspension both of corporeal, and mental faculties. After nursing him for some weeks, in the sick chamber, at Kingston, she was permitted to remove him to her own residence, in London; where

Digitized by Google

he continued to be attended by Heberden. But as the heat of summer approached, the physician advised her to take a lodging in Richmond, and put the young sufferer under the care of that excellent man of science and humanity, Dr. Lewis, of Kingston, author of the quarto volume entitled, *The Philosophical Commerce of Arts.* Dr. Lewis devoted himself, with the utmost kindness and zeal, to the difficult, and almost hopeless, restoration of his little patient. His rare chemical skill enabled him to try some unusual expedients; and Heaven so blessed his endeavours, that increasing hopes were gradually entertained, not only for the life, but even for the distorted body, and the suspended senses, of the young sufferer. His attentive and indefatigable mother, and his nurse, who was a secondary parent, had, for some time, been in the daily practice of conveying their senseless cripple for an airing, in a coach, into Richmond-park, where he long appeared incapable of noticing the beautiful scenery around him. But one day, in the course of their ride, a petty incident occurred, which his mother used frequently to mention as recalling to her memory the happiest moment of her existence. The little invalid suddenly exclaimed, with a vivacity to which he had long been a stranger, "Mamma! Mamma! there's a hare!" The vigilant mother, in turning her head, perceived that a hare was actually before them, and that her child was instantaneously restored to a just perception of objects presented to his eyes; the emotions of her heart, in that instant, as she often declared in her latter years, were unutterably sweet; and she never could mention the incident without tears of gratitude to Heaven. The

Digitized by Google

mental faculties of her little William seemed to waken into new life from that hour, and it was henceforth the study of this inestimable mother, to cherish and improve them.

The frame of his body had been so severely shattered, and for a long time required such continual support and attention, that it was impossible to think of sending the helpless cripple to any school. It was still the ambition of his provident mother, to render her son a scholar; for she regarded literature as one of the characteristics of a gentleman. As soon, therefore, as the young convalescent shewed himself able and willing to exercise his recovered intellects, she provided him with an occasional private tutor, from whom he might learn, in the most easy manner, the rudiments of the two learned languages. The name of this singular personage was "Ayles." He had been a fellow of King's College, in Cambridge. He was a man of very extensive reading, and passionately fond of books; but he had not been very prosperous in life; and now, at a very advanced age, he supported himself by the double occupation of giving lessons, by the hour, in Latin and Greek, and by making an index to the journals of parliament. He had, himself, formed a brief Latin grammar, for the use of some young ladies, his scholars; and with this he began to instruct his new disciple, whose mother was so pleased with his success, and entertained so much esteem for his intelligence, attention, and zeal, that she gradually placed her son entirely under his tuition, with a view of preparing him for the college of Eton, whenever his health and strength should be sufficiently restored to encounter the useful hardships of a public

Digitized by Google

education. To complete this preparation was a work of considerable time; in the course of which, the reviving Hayley first learned to walk upon crutches, then without them, on legs of unequal dimensions, and, lastly, to ride on a pony by the side of his private tutor, who was allowed, in summer, to provide a lodging at Teddington for himself and his pupil, that the young convalescent might have all the advantages of exercise and air. At Teddington, they lodged very near the house of that beneficent and memorable philosopher, the Rev. Stephen Hales, and were kindly noticed by their illustrious neighbour. Hayley has often expressed his regret, that he was too young to profit, as he wished to have done, by his intercourse with this interesting character, whom he and his preceptor frequently visited. He could recollect no circumstances relating to these visits, except the following. The philosophic divine once amused him with a sight of Epsom races, through his telescope, at Teddington; and once displayed to him, by his microscope, the circulation of blood in a frog. The young poet was at this time more devoted to verse than to philosophy; for while he resided at Teddington, he composed a voluntary epistle to a young lady, in Latin couplets. The name of the lady was Linkfield, and she had learned, from his old preceptor, the language in which her juvenile admirer presumed to address her. He had also made a considerable progress in Greek, before he quitted his private tutor, having got many of the epigrams in the Anthologia by heart, and being particularly charmed with Meleager's pathetic epitaph on his wife Heliodora. In his advanced life, he often tried in vain to recollect,

Digitized by Google

or to discover, what were the first English verses he composed. This, however, he could never clearly ascertain; but imagined, that one of his earliest productions, in rhyme, was a copy of verses addressed to Miss Read, the paintress, who executed a miniature of the young poet, in a Vandyke dress, as a bracelet for his mother, The features in this portrait represent a boy about the age of nine; the verses to the female artist were written at the time when this picture was painted. They celebrated her various works, both in miniature and crayons; and particularly a portrait of that exquisite actress, Mrs. Cibber, in Calista, the "Fair Penitent," of Rowe. The author, when, in the evening of his day, he was trying to collect materials for a life of himself, made many ineffectual researches for the recovery of these early rhymes. They escaped his research, and were probably destroyed; but he has mentioned them, in paying a tribute of gratitude to the memory of the paintress, in a note that he added to his Epistles on Painting, when he annexed that composition to his "Life of Romney," whose prosperity in art it was originally designed to promote.

The early passion of the young Hayley for poetry arose, as the same passion is said to have arisen in the bosom of our royal Alfred, from hearing poems read to him with taste and feeling by his mother.

The vigilant parent of the long-confined cripple, being a lady whose mind had been much cultivated by her uncle, the Bishop of Ely, with whom she had resided, and having herself the accomplishment of reading poetry with peculiar grace and delight,

Digitized by Google

neglected not her favourable opportunities of inspiring her son with an attachment to literature. It was one of his favourite pleasures, in his childhood, to hear her read, of which he gave a singular proof on a remarkable occasion. Having accidentally caught the small-pox, soon after he regained the use of his legs, and it being the medical fashion of the time to confine a patient in that disorder to his bed, the mother of the young poet found it rather difficult to reconcile him to such tiresome discipline. But as she appeared very anxious on this point, he said to her, "Well, I will promise you to continue in bed as long as you desire, if you will only promise to read to me Sir Philip Sidney's Arcadia, as long as I am so confined." A bargain so tender was rapidly settled, and the young patient, whose distemper was particularly mild, enjoyed the gratification of hearing the whole Arcadia (at that time a favourite of his fancy) read to him by the voice in which he delighted. Indeed all his home-bred delights, in his boyish days, were of a literary kind; for his nurse, who continued, for more than fifty years, as a beloved and revered character in his family, was as fond of books as her mistress; of which she gave no common proof by the following speech to the poet, who, happening to ask her if she had ever read Homer, in an English translation, the good old woman replied, with her usual arch smile, "Ay! long before you were born." This passed in their advanced life: but while he was yet a child, this extraordinary nurse took great pleasure in prevailing on the young scholar to recite to her passages in his favourite tragedies, the species of poetry to which they were both equally

Digitized by Google

partial. This circumstance gave rise to a little domestic incident that might have proved a tragedy indeed. It happened in Leicester Fields, where Mrs. Hayley, after her removal from Chichester, had fixed her residence. It chanced that she was writing letters, alone, in her dressing-room; while, in the apartment under it, the young poet was spouting tragedy to his poetical nurse, who sat busy in taking to pieces a gown belonging to her mistress; for which purpose she had an open penknife in her lap. The little impassioned tragedian was reciting a speech of Othello; and catching up the penknife to give more energy to his action, without meaning to wound himself, as he pronounced the words

> "I took by the throat, the circumcised dog;
> "And smote him thus"—

he pretended to plunge the knife in his breast. It was more than pretence, for the instrument was sharp, and penetrated far beyond the innocent intention of the actor. His blood gushed forth on the affrighted nurse, whose outcry instantly brought her mistress to the scene. It was now too tragic; for the effusion of blood was so great, and the wound appeared so wide, that his mother sent instantly for a surgeon, who happened to be a favourite with her son. The undaunted actor rather wished to treat the incident as a trifle, and to hush it up in silence, because he was engaged for the evening to be the spectator of a tragedy in the play-house. This, however, his friend, the surgeon, prohibited; for, on probing the wound, he declared, that if the knife had not providentially struck one of his ribs, it must have ended

Digitized by Google

his life. He conjured him to remain contentedly at home for a few days, and to grow a little more cautious in the domestic display of his tragical powers.

While the young student continued to improve in health, and to acquire some Greek, and more Latin, in the tranquillity of private education, learning appeared to him an agreeable pastime, and his life glided on with delicious serenity, under the influence of maternal affection. But the season approached, when this tender nurseling, who had been gradually raised, by the kindest incessant attention, from a state of the most pitiable infirmity to the strength and sprightliness of regular health, was to exchange all his home-bred indulgences and delights for the hardships of a public school. It was the ambition of his excellent mother to see her son an accomplished manly character; and some of her friends had induced her to believe, that, to form such a character completely, it is necessary for a youth to pass a few years in one of the great schools of our country. This idea induced her to sacrifice the delight that she took in continually superintending the tuition of her son at home; and as he was now in the twelfth year of his age, she conveyed him to Eton, on the 31st of August, 1757.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER IV.

FROM THE ENTRANCE OF HAYLEY AT ETON, TO HIS FIRST RESIDENCE IN CAMBRIDGE.

THE years that a boy passes at school are often very erroneously called the happiest years of his life. The poet Cowper considered them rather as eminently wretched. They were so assuredly to him; and his friend Hayley resembled him in this particular; for his own juvenile sufferings had been so acute, that his mind recoiled, with emotions of indignation and disgust, from the recollection of the first years that he passed at Eton. Being still afflicted with a considerable degree of lameness, he was often galled by the gibes and rough treatment of elder boys, some of whom he deemed his inferiors, not only in fortune but in scholarship, The young poet was sufficiently vain of that little portion of classical learning which he had acquired from his private tutor, and which was certainly creditable, considering in what time and under what disadvantages it had been gained. But a hasty punishment, at his new school, for an accidental neglect of a Greek lesson, had a tendency rather to mar than to improve the scholar. His high spirit so revolted at the indignity of being whipped, that he was almost tempted to abjure all future study of a language, which more indulgent and more judicious treatment might very soon have led him to idolize. He

Digitized by Google

repeated, on the occasion, one of his favourite maxims, from his old acquaintance, the English dramatic poets,

"Force works on servile natures, not on free."

In his subsequent reflections, as a man, on this incident of his boyish days, and the effect which it certainly had to alienate his mind, for some time, from the study of a language for which he had before entertained a predilection, he was led to meditate on the various ill effects of corporal punishments, upon ingenuous youth. He wished to banish them as a barbarous absurdity, from every school, and conceived for that purpose, the plan of an extensive satirical and moral poem, in several cantos, which he meant to entitle "The Expulsion of the Rod;" a design, in which the author intended to prove himself as much a friend to just and sound discipline, as he professed himself an enemy to all brutal force. No vestiges appear of any verses, that might form a part of this projected work; and the idea was probably relinquished for subjects more attractive to the fancy of the poet. But to return to his sensations as a boy. By the removal of an assistant from his school, he ceased to be a pupil of the man who had wounded his pride, by a punishment which that accomplished preceptor would certainly have averted from his new little disciple, had he had leisure to observe his native disposition, and to perceive that a few kind words, from a person he regarded, were the only sort of coercion that he required, and that he could patiently and profitably endure. When Sumner quitted Eton, to become the head master of Harrow, many of his pupils at the former place, and the young Hayley among them, became the

Digitized by Google

pupils of Roberts, who, from his rank of an assistant, arose, in time, to the dignity of provost. Roberts was himself a poet, and perceiving in his new disciple, a passion for poetry, he did not fail to cherish it by much liberal praise; and particularly, by a public act of kindness, which made a deep impression on the mind of the young poet. He was then in the fifth form; and his poetical tutor, being highly pleased with a copy of his Latin verses, to speak in the school phrase, "*sent them up for good*," an honour peculiarly flattering to a young aspiring fancy. Hayley, who had begun to write Latin verse, under his private tutor at home, now wrote it with great facility, in the various measures of the heroic, and the lyric, muse. He had ever a great propensity to study, and it is remarkable, that when the unseasonable punishment mentioned before, induced him to turn with indignation from a Greek lesson, he employed many hours of private application, in transcribing manuscript collections of such Latin verses, as had been admired under the title of *Play Exercises*. His associate and fellow student, in this useful, and voluntary occupation, was the boy immediately above him, and his particular friend, George Heath, who gradually became head master of the school, and canon of Windsor. Each of them formed, as a treasure for his own private library, some volumes of this transcribed poetry.

Hayley, who had an early passion for splendid books, had no less than six volumes, transcribed in his own hand, and bound by the celebrated bookbinder, Roger Payne, who was then young in his trade, and resided at Eton, or Windsor. Hayley did not fail to insert in his six volumes, the Latin verses, which his tutor

Digitized by Google

Roberts had honoured with public approbation. As the book is within reach, the commencement of this little fortunate exercise may be transcribed, as a curious specimen of his early composition.

βαλε φεγγος
Ηριγενης, κινυντο δ' ανα πτολιεθρον εκαστα.

Quæ rerum facies, ridendaque surgat imago,
Ante tuum quàm, Phœbe, jubar densâ urbe tenebras
Expulit, Auroræque refert spectacula primæ
Musa, virûmque artes varias, cantusque sonoros?
En ubi per plateam, tardo pede vix incedens,
Ore senex jam nunc nascentia lumina rauco,
Proclamat, fractæ consumptos lampadis ignes
Læva tenet, quos sæpe vagans sub nocte malignus
Vi subitâ rapere, aut gelidâ perfundere gaudet:
Voce autem rauca tandem senis experrectus
Surgere ter gestit vates, ter multus apertæ
Se rimæ insinuat Zephyrus tremulumque relabi
Cogit; at atra fames, at paupertatis imago
Occurrunt menti; stimulis citò suscitus istis
Exsilit è lecto, poscitque in carmina musas,
Felix si modicæ acquirat sibi fercula cœnæ.

The volume whence these verses are copied, contains two Latin compositions, of a more serious spirit, by the same juvenile poet; one in heroic verse, a speech of Alexander, over the tomb of Achilles; the other, a speech of Hannibal, on his recal from Italy, an Ode in Alcaics. But the reader will probably think what is already transcribed, a sufficient specimen of a school boy's Latin poetry. Some brief examples, therefore, of his English, and

Digitized by Google

spontaneous verse, composed in his boyish days, shall be now exhibited. Many of his early rhymes have been lost, for as he composed with such facility, that he might say with Ovid,

"Quicquid volui dicere, versus erat,"

he was more eager to advance in new composition, than to preserve what he had written. From a few loose papers of his early unfinished compositions, I will select two stanzas, that seem to delineate the heart of the young Author, in a serious point of view. They form the commencement of an ode

TO INGRATITUDE.

Of all the vices, that malignant brood,
In man's polluted breast,
(Whether they spring from our frail nature's course,
Or owing to ill custom's force,)
Guard me, ye Gods! from what I most detest!
From that sure bane of all that's fair and good,
From that curst foe to every sacred tie
Of love, affection, amity,
Stranger to joy, and peace, and balmy rest,
Never blessing, never blest,
Ingratitude!

II.

Ingratitude! such rank offence,
To all the plainest rules of sense,
We scarce can think, it e'er began
Without long labour, fixt intent,
And force upon the natural bent
Of reasonable man!

Digitized by Google

With this fragment, is found also, in the author's juvenile handwriting, an epistle, in English rhyme, from Sophonisba, having received the poison, to Masinissa. A memorandum, in the same hand, declares the epistle was composed before the author had attained the age of fifteen. He thus found leisure to indulge his early and strong propensity to poetical composition in his native language, while he was now advancing in the acquisition of classical scholarship. The Drama was the prime favourite of his fancy, and his passion for it hurried him into a bold adventure, which drew on him a severe corporal punishment, and made him eager to accelerate the period of bidding a final adieu to school. He had persuaded one of his schoolfellows, whose name was Manly, a youth of great good-nature, to join with him, in a secret excursion to London, for the sake of seeing a play. For this purpose, they feigned illness, and contrived their measures so dexterously, that they would have escaped discovery, had they not been so unlucky as to meet their apothecary on the road. He betrayed them, and they were consequently exposed to the severest whipping, that the strong arm of Barnard (the head master) could inflict. Manly, who had a frame of adamant, sustained his portion of this vehement scourging, without allowing a single groan to escape him. Hayley, who contemplated his associates' serenity on the block, resolved to equal his fortitude; but, as he afterwards confessed to his companion, he almost bit his under lip asunder, in suppressing his sense of the pain he endured. He did not, however, murmur at a punishment, the justness of which it was impossible to dispute; but he anxiously

Digitized by Google

wished to hasten the arrival of the time, when his regular emancipation from scholastic discipline would allow him to enjoy his favourite pastime, a well-acted tragedy, without any hazard of paying for his diversion with his blood. As he rose near the top of the school, and as the person was no longer alive, who, in advising his mother to place him at Eton, had wished to see him a Fellow of King's College, in Cambridge, he easily persuaded his indulgent parent, to let him relinquish his chance of obtaining what he did not himself desire; for he wished to enter his name in what he esteemed a more eligible College, in the same University. He preferred the smaller society of Trinity Hall, because, under the plea of being trained for civilians, the students were exempted from many academical ceremonies, and enjoyed the privilege of studying, in any mode most agreeable to themselves.

But before we settle the young academician in his favourite college, it will be proper to notice some important particulars, in his pursuits both of literature and of love, that occurred in the interval between the time of his bidding adieu to Eton, and his first residence in Cambridge. He quitted school in his 18th year (1763), residing with his mother, who, at this time, had so spacious a lodging in Bedford Street, that it allowed ample room for her son to display, according to his own fancy, the copious library of his father, which he now began to methodize and to augment. He also engaged a French master, by the hour; and soon acquired enough of that language, to read it with facility. As summer was advancing, his mother, who wished him to cultivate the regard of their Sussex friends, hired apartments for her-

Digitized by Google

self, and her son, in a house adjoining to the cloister of Chichester Cathedral. This rendered them very near neighbours to Dean Ball, one of the three guardians to young Hayley, and one who, having been a most intimate friend of his father, always shewed, to his only remaining orphan, a tenderness truly paternal. He was an amiable divine, who had received from nature very sprightly talents, with a benevolent and convivial hilarity of temper; but his domestic enjoyments had been overclouded by the darkest of calamities. His excellent wife had lost her senses, in losing several children. They had a daughter, named Eliza, born at a subsequent period, who was now a beautiful girl, of about fourteen years of age, and possessed of great tenderness, and vivacity of mind.

She had been recalled from a very good school at Chelsea, to preside in her father's house, whose afflictions, and whose age had rendered him not so fit to complete the mental education of such a daughter, as their friends could wish, particularly the Hayleys, who were both cordially attached to the old Dean, and his interesting Eliza, whose mind and heart the young scholar began to cultivate, with all the sincerity of a brother. His fraternal regard for her was apparently exempted from the peril of turning into a fonder attachment, by the circumstance of his having his heart entirely devoted to another lady, to whom the young Eliza was a most zealous friend and confidant. The lady alluded to, was the youngest daughter of Mr. Page, the member for Chichester, and like the Dean, an old and intimate friend of the Hayleys. He had invited Mrs. Hayley and her son to pass

Digitized by Google

some time at his seat, called Watergate, a sequestered scene, eight miles from Chichester, and surrounded by groves peculiarly suited to contemplation and to love. When they were preparing for this agreeable visit, the Dean said to his young ward, "William, you will find a very sweet girl in Fanny Page, and she was always intended by her parents as a wife for your elder brother." "Was she so," replied William, "then she must certainly belong to me by an hereditary right, and I shall assuredly make love to her." The skies seemed to favour this sportive declaration; for when the young Frances and William had been a few days together, it happened, that a thunder-storm surprised them in the groves mentioned above. The lady was constitutionally affected by the turbulent elements, and she actually fainted in the arms of William, an incident alluded to, in the following affectionate impromptu of the young Poet,

August 15th, 1763.

"Let not the angry storm, that rages,
"Give thy tender soul alarm!
"From the war, that nature wages,
"Fear, thou dearest girl, no harm!

"The thunder's rage, the lightning's flashes,
"Tho' nature's self can scarce endure,
"Tho' cities are consumed to ashes,
"Thy innocence is still secure."

These hasty verses were soon followed by others more boldly expressive of affection; and the incident of the storm seems to have raised, and confirmed, a very strong mutual attachment,

Digitized by Google

between the tender sufferer from that tempest, and her enamoured protector. The progress of his attachment will appear in verses and letters of subsequent years. Here it will be sufficient to observe, that the young lover was encouraged in his passion, not only by the fair one herself, but by two old and highly-esteemed friends of her family, the Dean, and Mr. Steele, the Recorder of Chichester; and, what was not less grateful to his filial feelings, by the delight with which his excellent mother contemplated the domestic character of his Frances.

That anxious considerate parent observed with complacency this early passion of her son. She knew the object of it to be most amiable, and she hoped that his love, without receiving either encouragement or opposition from her, might quietly take root in his heart, and prove to him of double use, as an incentive to diligence in his studies, and a preservative against the coarser affections of youthful liberty. It really proved so in a considerable degree. His name was entered at Trinity-Hall, in this autumn; and he went to Cambridge, with a heart thoroughly filled with the attractions of this early object of his choice.

Before he began his academical residence, he was engaged in a journey of pleasure, and also in a poetical adventure, by his cheerful good-natured relation, the Rev. Dr. Gooch, of Ditton, near Cambridge, who, having kindly prepared for his settlement in a favourite college, desired his company to the distant seat of his brother, the Baronet, Sir Thomas Gooch, an original character, not a little diverting to both his visitants, who were more amused by his personal oddities, than awed by his rustic

Digitized by Google

dignity and importance. The young poet was obliged to his conductor, in this excursion, for a pleasant view of many agreeable scenes in Norfolk and Suffolk, and for a cheerful transient acquaintance with some lovely young ladies, and one very pleasing literary divine in that part of the world, the Rev. Mr. Davy, who took a very kind interest in some of his juvenile poetical productions.

His good-humoured relation had also excited him to prepare, before he settled in college, an English Ode, to be inserted in the collection of verses which the University intended to publish on the birth of the Prince of Wales.

When he had finished his ode, he sent it to receive the sanction or the condemnation of his friendly and poetical tutor, Roberts, of Eton, who favoured his quondam pupil with a polite letter on the occasion, from which, to render justice to the liberal mind of the writer, the first paragraph will be here transcribed.

"ETON, *October* 27, 1763.

"Dear Sir,

"I have just received your letter, with the ode enclosed, "which, though I always thought highly of your poetical talents, "is much better than I could have expected. I would advise "you by all means to have it printed in the Cambridge collection; "I am sure it will do you credit. The images are many of "them new, and most of them proper."

In consequence of this approbation, the ode was inserted in the Cambridge collection, applauded, and reprinted in the

Digitized by Google

Gentleman's Magazine. But the highest gratification which the young poet received from this first appearance in print, was the opportunity which it afforded him of expressing a deep sense of all that he owed to the virtues and the affection of his invaluable mother. To her he had great delight in presenting a proof sheet of his ode, with an inscription addressed to herself, and containing, in language more diffuse but not less fervent, the sum of what Horace has said of his muse, in the following verse:

"Quod spiro et placeo, si placeo, tuum est."

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

BOOK THE SECOND.

FROM HAYLEY'S FIRST RESIDENCE IN CAMBRIDGE, TO THE PERIOD OF HIS QUITTING THE UNIVERSITY.

CHAPTER I.

ACADEMICAL FRIENDS.

To a youth who has a disposition to relish the refined pleasures of literature and friendship, the first years of academical life are in general eminently agreeable.

To the young poet of Sussex, Cambridge proved a scene of no irksome labour, and of much cheerful gratification. In the only two lecturers of Trinity-hall, there was nothing to inspire awe or apprehension; the one lectured in civil law, and the other in Longinus. If their lectures were more dull than instructive, the personal oddities of the men were not a little diverting to young scholars, who, like Hayley and his intimate friend and fellow-student, Thornton, possessed enough of classical learning themselves, to perceive that they had nothing to fear in the literary abilities of those whose lectures they attended. Such a percep-

Digitized by Google

tion, however, had not the probable effect of making them idle; on the contrary, it quickened their application to the languages they loved, Latin and Greek, which it was their custom to read in their private studies. It may here be remarked, to the honour of friendship, that it was a perfect intimacy, and a long course of social study, with this learned, amiable, and exemplary young man, that particularly endeared to Hayley his residence in college; as he has testified in the following lines of the poem, which he published, at a subsequent period, on the early decease of his friend:

> "Friend of my opening soul, whose love began
> "To hail thy poet, ere he rank'd as man!
> "Dear, firm associate of his studious hour!
> "Who led his idler step to Learning's bower,
> "Tho' young, imparting to his giddier youth,
> "Thy thirst of science, and thy zeal for truth!
> "Ye towers of Granta! where our friendship grew,
> "And that pure mind expanded to my view,
> "Our love fraternal let your walls attest,
> "Where Attic joys our lettered evening blest!
> "Where midnight, from the chains of sleep relieved,
> "Stole on our social studies unperceived!"

The social studies, which the poet has thus commemorated, were very far from being confined to the dead languages. An elderly, ingenious, and distressed Italian, happening, at this time, to attempt gaining a livelihood by teaching his own language in Cambridge, Thornton and Hayley became two of his earliest scholars. They pitied his distresses, and gradually conceived a great regard for this intelligent and interesting man. As he

Digitized by Google

had little to do, he was thankful to have the privilege of passing much of his time with the two friendly scholars, who always read together; and having learned from him to read, write, and speak Italian with fluency, continued to employ him in teaching them the language of Spain. They read with him several Spanish historians and poets. Their grateful master, who gradually rose to considerable celebrity in his profession, by the name of Isola, was pleased to attribute his prosperity in Cambridge, to the favour he experienced from his two young and social disciples of Trinity-hall.

Thornton was not the only congenial companion whose friendship Hayley had the pleasure and advantage of cultivating in his own college. That favourite scene contained a group of friends, whose custom it was to breakfast by turns in the apartments of each other. Thornton, Hayley, Beridge and Clyfford, were four most cordial associates, who first established this temperately convivial fraternity. They afterwards admitted to their party two other members of their college, Jeremy Buck, of Yorkshire, and Simon le Blanc, who has risen to the bench of judges; a dignity in which Thornton would probably have proved his senior, had not a severe, internal, excruciating and inscrutable malady, put an early period to the life of that excellent and highly promising young man.

It was the lot of Hayley, to lose and lament many of his early friends. One loss of this kind had already afflicted him. Among his juvenile letters, there is one addressed to a poetical youth, of Wales, whose name was Clough, and whom he had left at Eton.

Digitized by Google

Thence he sent to the young poet of Sussex, an elegant Latin ode to Venus, and Hayley, in returning his thanks for so lively a present, concluded his letter with an imitation, in English verse, of the ode he received; adding to the close of it some stanzas on the country of his friend. The fate of this amiable youth of Cambria, appears in the following passage of a letter from Hayley, in college, to his mother, in London, on the illness of a servant.

"I thank you much for your concern, and apprehension of my "being deeply affected at your melancholy account. Indeed, I "cannot but say, the loss of that poor fellow will hurt me. My "feelings are naturally quick, and they have been thoroughly "awakened and sharply touched, in more than one instance, "within these six months. You will be surprised, when I tell "you, that at four o'clock on Friday morning last, poor Clough "was buried. He was inoculated some time in the week before, "and died of the disorder, without seeing his mother or any re-"lation. You may think, possibly, from this part of my letter, "that I am in the greatest degree low-spirited; but I can assure "you, that I am far from it. Some circumstances, indeed, have "conspired to throw a kind of melancholy over my nature, "which is in itself, you tell me, rather too much inclined to it. "But I would not wish to part with it, for however unfit it may "render a man for public business in the world, it will fill him "with a happy benevolence in private life. There is no time "when you could induce a man to do more for a living friend, "than when his heart is filled with memory of the dead."

Digitized by Google

The death of more than one young person whom he regarded, had at this time given a serious cast to the mind of Hayley. Though his letter intimates as much to his mother, it does not explain the peculiar sorrow to which he alluded, and which he imparted to her in conversation; as it was a general rule with him to conceal nothing, that affected his heart, from her the most confidential and judicious of his friends, especially such troubles as originated in the warmth and vivacity of his own feelings.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER II.

OCCUPATIONS IN COLLEGE.

The cheerful friendship of his young associates in College, his various studies, and the engaging amusement of drawing, to which he now devoted some hours every day, soon banished from the spirit of Hayley, those clouds of melancholy that had excited apprehension in his affectionate mother.

On his first residence in College, he had followed the advice of his recent acquaintance, George Steevens, (afterwards distinguished as the Editor of Shakspeare) and engaged a drawing-master, highly and justly recommended by that gentleman, who had lately ceased to reside, as an honorary member of King's College, where he had exercised his pencil, under that simple but engaging instructor, whom he now introduced to the notice and esteem of his younger friend.

This humble professor of an enchanting art, whose name was Brotherton, had a benevolent simplicity of character, that endeared him to all his scholars. He was soon attached to Hayley as a friend. They were alternately instructors to each other; for the poet, by his friendship with Meyer, the most eminent painter in miniature, soon acquired such knowledge in the management

Digitized by Google

of water colours, as enabled him to instruct, and improve in that article, his academical drawing-master; whose chief excellence was the wonderful fidelity and neatness, with which he could copy, with a pen, the most elaborate of etchings. He had, however, great versatility of talent, and occasionally employed himself in all the branches of art. Hayley never ceased to regard him, and to draw, or paint, under his inspection, during all the years that he continued in Cambridge; conveying to London, in every vacation, the various produce of his pencil to the great delight of his mother. To dismiss this subject at once, I will here enumerate a few of his principal productions. The Jupiter and Io, from a print after Titian, the landscape by Hayley, the figures by his friend Steevens; Views in Cambridgeshire; the Church of Ditton; and Clare-Hall Bridge; a highly finished drawing in pencil from the Sigismunda of Corregio; and its companion, a Saint Cecilia, singing, from a small picture, in enamel. Another, a pencil drawing, as highly finished, the Venus of Corregio. Mars and Venus, painted on a large piece of ivory, after Titian, a small picture in water colours. Monkeys in the habit of Capuchins, a copy from Goupy, after a large picture of Teniers. Small heads of our Saviour and St. John, after Raphael, minutely finished in water colours, for a pair of bracelets.

Such were his performances of the pencil, during his residence in College; nor was he less diligent with his books, for he enjoyed, at that period, uncommon powers of application; and after employing several hours of day-light in painting miniature, he often read Demosthenes, &c., with Thornton, until one o'clock

Digitized by Google

in the morning, without feeling any symptoms of fatigue in his eyes. But it is time to recollect that he derives one of his chief claims to remembrance, from his poetry.

Let us proceed, therefore, to examine what traces can be found of his poetical compositions, at this period. We find two that bear the date of 1765, entitled to some notice.

His early passion for a fair one of his native country, his gentle Fanny, was still prevalent in his bosom. An Elegy, of this year, alludes to the incident that gave rise to their mutual affection. The three stanzas with which it opens are these;

"Hark! how the thunder rends the troubled air!
"Louder again it bursts, and yet more loud!
"While lightnings dart a momentary glare,
"In quick succession from the opening cloud.

"Where rests Euphelia now! whose tender form
"I've seen these warring elements oppress;
"Whose bosom trembles at each rising storm,
"And deeply suffers undeserved distress.

"Where rests the head, that once, on this proud arm,
"In hour more greatly terrible was laid,
"When o'er those eyes whose lustre used to charm,
"Pale sickness cast a melancholy shade?"

The poet, after indulging his fancy on the probable occupations of the distant nymph, and his apprehensions of what she may suffer from the severity of the elements, closes his poem by inviting her

"To find a refuge in the folds of love."

Another short and unprinted poem of Hayley, belongs to this

Digitized by Google

year 1765; for it is mentioned in one of his letters to his mother, from college, as a recent production.

TIGRANES AND ARBACIA.

A TALE.

The story that gave birth to these verses, is an amiable instance of conjugal affection, mentioned by Xenophon, in the third book of his Cyropædia. Tigranes had left his wife, whom he most passionately loved, to the care of his father, the King of Armenia, who was attacked in the mean time, by Cyrus, for deserting his uncle Cyaxares, whose forces Cyrus then led. The King and his whole family were made prisoners, and ordered to plead their cause before their triumphant antagonist, in the open field.

Flush'd with his conquest, and with youth elate,
Cyrus aloft maintained his awful state:
His valiant friends, were placed in order round,
While captives plead for mercy, on the ground.
Sudden, without attendants, or disguise,
His eager fondness beaming from his eyes,
Tigranes issued forth, with transport prest
The lost Arbacia to his panting breast;
"And have I found thee?" With that trembling sound
Sunk his faint voice, in swelling rapture drown'd;
And starting tears, as from his eyes they stole,
Spoke the strong feelings of his melting soul.
Cyrus, amazed, the tender scene surveyed,
And thus, with seeming scorn, insulting said:
"Thus lost in passion, doating to excess,
While thus you feel, or counterfeit distress,

Digitized by Google

Tell me what ransom to redeem a Bride"—
"What ransom! (quick the frantic husband cried)
If wealth and empire be thy sole design,
Our vanquished Kingdom, and our all, is thine.
But if the thirst of blood thy soul inflame,
Glut thy revenge on this unworthier frame.
Say, is that form, so exquisitely fair,
Justice herself would pause, and falt'ring spare;
With sweetest innocence, whose soft control
Should shake the firmest purpose of thy soul,
Is it to bondage doomed? can thy fierce heart
So mangle nature, in her dearest part?
Here, with less guilt, thy keenest malice try!
Year after year, in tortures let me lie;
And, in his bitterest pangs, the world shall see
Tigranes happy, if Arbacia's free."
"Forgive, (the Prince replied) thou generous youth!
Too hard a trial of sincerest truth.
Blest in each other, and in virtue's dower,
Beyond the reach of treacherous fortune's power;
Spirits like yours, in sphere superior move:
Mankind must reverence; and the gods must love.
Here every idle, anxious fear resign!
Free are thy subjects, and Arbacia thine.
Long may your loves that blissful state enjoy,
That envy cannot blast, or chance destroy.
Hail! happiest union! nature's noblest plan,
To crown the blessings of her favourite man!
When swiftly darting thro' th' embattled line,
I've seen fair conquest to our arms incline,
Seen o'er the dead my bounding chariot roll,
Strong was the joy that fired my madd'ning soul.

Digitized by Google

And when the fury of the battle done,
Mercy restored what injured valour won,
I've thank'd the gods, whose high protection gave
That happiest, noblest privilege, to save.
But weak these pleasures, these delights must prove
To the pure raptures of connubial love."
As thus, the Prince, his clemency exprest,
In tears of gratitude Tigranes blest
His great deliverer; while all around
Th' applauding shouts of general joy resound.
At length, all acts of princely favour shewn,
The banquet ended, and the guests alone,
Much on this youthful victor they discourse,
His matchless conduct, his resistless force;
His bold exploits their admiration raise;
But on his mercy dwells eternal praise.
To speak his person's charms, the women join;
His air majestic, and his grace divine.
"What thinks Arbacia?" "For my thoughts," she said,
"My fixt attention ne'er the Prince surveyed."
"Who then? (again the quick Tigranes cries,)
"Say! who could thus engross Arbacia's eyes?"
"My eyes, as blind to every meaner sight,
On one sole object fastened with delight;
My every sense, my soul, suspended hung,
On the dear accents of a husband's tongue;
Lived in that voice, which said—the world should see
Tigranes happy, if Arbacia's free."
A flood of fondness her faint voice supprest,
And while her closing eyes her heart exprest,
She sunk in silent raptures on his breast.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER III.

PROSPECTS IN LIFE.

Such were the poetical amusements of Hayley in the year 1765. In the following year he probably began to think seriously on plans of future life, as among his early papers we find a certificate of his admission to the society of the Middle Temple, dated the 13th June, 1766: but he never resided, or studied in that motley scene of business and dissipation. He, like his friend Cowper, was one of those numerous literary idlers, who, while they profess themselves votaries of Themis, devote most of their attention to the more alluring divinities of Parnassus. Yet, as his spirit was naturally active and sanguine, he pleased himself with the persuasion, that he should be diligent and prosperous, in his great wish, to enliven with affluence the latter days of that admirable parent, who had struggled through many troubles and perplexities, in rearing the only object of her maternal solicitude.

One of his letters from College, bearing no date, but probably written in the spring of this year, may serve to shew the strength and tenderness of his filial feelings at this period.

Digitized by Google

To Mrs. Hayley,
Bedford-Street.

Wednesday, Trinity-Hall.

My Dear Madam,

"Thornton has gone to search for herbs with our bo-
"tanical professor, and Brotherton has just taken Stevenson's
"declamation to transcribe; so that I have now (and it so
"happens but seldom,) an hour to myself; nor could it happen
"more to my satisfaction, as it gives me an opportunity of
"mentioning a circumstance in your letter, upon which I cannot
"be silent. You will easily perceive, that I mean the lowness
"of spirits, you complain of, which, you well know, must ever
"give me concern. As it is a kind of disorder, that depends,
"possibly, upon the weather, or at least on a thousand little
"circumstances full as variable, I know that reasoning, in
"general, effects but little towards removing the complaint. But
"the words of affection are more prevalent than those of philo-
"sophy; and you will, at least, pardon, if not believe me, should
"I endeavour to produce a reason why you ought not to be
"dispirited. It is true that our fortunes are not such as we
"could wish; but surely there are circumstances to balance that
"consideration, and you, who have seen so much of the world,
"will, I think, allow with me, that if *many* are more easy than
"we are, in point of fortune, *very few* live together in the har-
"mony that we do. Which are the most happy?

"I am very singular in my ways of thinking, and have innu-
"merable faults; but have been blest with sufficient sensibility

Digitized by Google

" and understanding, to love and to admire you. One would " almost think, that such a situation must be sufficient to prevent " every uneasiness; but such is human nature, that the most " trivial incidents will, at particular times, have such power, as to " excite dissatisfaction where there is least reason to entertain it. " Perhaps we should be wrong to wish it otherwise; at least I " am willing to consider these gloomy minutes as resembling the " dark shades in painting, which add new grace to the more " animated parts.

" You have, I must allow, more reason to be solicitous and " attentive to little matters, than is agreeable; but I think, " considering all things, there is a probability that we shall, by " some means or other, be enabled to lay aside that solicitude. As " to the approaching summer, I could wish you to be some little " time in the country, as I think it is necessary for your health " and spirits. I should certainly be glad to pass a fortnight with " you in Sussex, as I have a great desire to catch a sight of " Fanny, if possible; for you well know how amiable I think " her, and how partial I am to her tenderness of heart and sim- " plicity of manners: but do not by any means imagine that I " shall be wretched, if I am disappointed in the hope of seeing " her this summer. I will believe, with you, that patience is the " most sure way of obtaining our wishes, and that it is much " safer to remain inactive, than to intrude without any permission. " Let us think we shall be happy, and we are so! Adieu!

" Your dutiful, and most affectionate,

" W. HAYLEY."

Digitized by Google

The passion which the young poet had conceived for the lady above-mentioned, under circumstances peculiarly suited to make a lasting impression on a youthful fancy, still rendered her the prime object of his meditations, though he acquiesced in the judicious advice that two of his elderly friends, who were most intimate with the lady's father, had repeatedly given him, not to be too hasty in his addresses, but to hope every thing from time, with patience and industry. Such advice had probably induced him to devote so much time to serious reading, that he seems to have indulged his fancy in no poetical composition in the year 1766, except a few brief verses relating to the distant object of his love. For her he also employed his pencil, at this time, painting the heads, in miniature, from Raphael, which he intended for her bracelets, and a fan-mount, expressive of affection, in the figures of Angelica and Medora, from the design of West.

His pencil was also employed in the service of friendship, as he painted, this year, a diminutive portrait, in a ring, of the little Rachel, the youngest daughter of his relation Dr. Gooch.

Early in the following year, 1767, Hayley appears to have taken his leave of the university, as the last payment to the tutor of his college that is found in his annual pocket-books, bears the date of February 18, 1767. The three years of voluntary and social study that he had enjoyed in that quiet but active scene, were always agreeable to his recollection, as they were endeared to his heart by various enjoyments of indelible friendship. His attachment to his three fellow collegians, Thornton, Beridge, and

Digitized by Google

Clifford, continued, with unabated ardour, through all the mortal existence of those very amiable men.

"Animæ quales non candidiores terra tulit."

As the students of Trinity-hall, under the plea of devoting themselves to the civil law, are exempted from the public exercises of the university, and as Hayley left college without taking any degree, he never appeared as a disputant in the schools, but he often frequented them as a favourite amusement; for he had great pleasure in hearing the Latin language eloquently spoken by two moderators of his time, John Jebb and Richard Watson. The first of these eminent scholars honoured him so far as to transcribe one of his poems, in a later season of his life; and the second, who rose to the mitre of Landaff, and added dignity to his episcopal station by various admirable publications in the cause of Christianity, honoured him still more, by a friendly and extensive correspondence, which will be duly noticed in the course of this Memoir.

Digitized by Google

BOOK THE THIRD.

FROM THE TIME OF HAYLEY'S LEAVING COLLEGE, TO HIS ESTABLISHMENT AT EARTHAM.

CHAPTER I.

RESIDENCE IN QUEEN-STREET, AND EXCURSION TO SCOTLAND.

The excellent mother who, with the greatest vigilance and anxiety, had conducted her single orphan through all the perils of infancy and youth, was peculiarly desirous of rendering his situation as agreeable to his feelings as she could, on his entrance into professional life. For this purpose, before he quitted the university, she had taken a house that pleased him in Great Queen-street, Lincoln's-inn-fields; a house that he believed to have been the residence of the celebrated Sir Godfrey Kneller. It had the advantage of a few trees, in the little area behind it, which gave to the windows of the young poet's library, on the first floor, a pleasing appearance of verdure and retirement, as the house was lofty and commodious. He here enjoyed the gratification of arranging and contemplating his considerable and

Digitized by Google

increasing collection of books; and here he felt the inestimable blessing of living with a parent, who had no purpose in life, but to promote his happiness, and whose heart and mind rendered her a most judicious counsellor, and a very delightful companion.

She was not only indulgent to her son, on every occasion, but took a most cheerful and endearing interest in all the important pursuits, and all the innocent pleasures, of his favourite young friends. Two of these were now residing in Edinburgh; Stevenson and Beridge: the first, as private tutor to a young man of fortune; the second, as a student of physic.

Hayley expressed a strong inclination to visit these pleasant associates, and enjoy the opportunity they suggested to him, of surveying the interesting scenery of the north, in their society. His mother favoured the project, and on the 24th of April he began his travels, in the stage-coach, for Newcastle. There with the assistance of the bell-man, he obtained a fellow-traveller, a Scottish divine, to proceed in post-chaises to Edinburgh.

An apartment was ready to receive him in the boarding-house where his friend Beridge resided. It was situated in Carruber's Close, and kept by two worthy ancient maidens, who were styled the Miss Grahams. Their table was frugal, but neat, and generally attended by six or seven young men of pleasing manners and lively conversation. The principal of these, were the three medical students, Beridge, Okes, and Reynolds. Edinburgh, though, at that period, it was far from being such a scene of elegance, and decoration, as it has since become, yet had objects of curiosity in abun-

Digitized by Google

dance, to interest and entertain the young traveller of Sussex. He was charmed with the wild grandeur of the scenery. Arthur's Seat, and the ruins of Holyrood Palace, were the favourites of his fancy. In the old chapel, he found the loose and uncovered bones, that were said to have once formed the lofty person of Lord Darnley, the husband of the ill-fated Queen Mary. The young traveller measured the thigh-bone with his own, as his own he deemed rather longer than the common size, but that of Lord Darnley exceeded it considerably. A residence of more than two months in Edinburgh, inspired Hayley with a lasting regard for the natives of the north. He had the gratification of hearing the celebrated historian, Robertson, speak in the Ecclesiastical Assembly; but the chief object of his admiration, in that assembly, was a simple peasant, who, having occasion to relate some particular facts, delivered his story and hiss entiments, with a simplicity, good sense, and modesty, that eclipsed all the professed orators of the meeting. Hayley did not happen to visit any of the several eminent authors in Scotland; his time was chiefly devoted to the young friends, whom he came expressly to see, and to the acquisition of personal accomplishments, in dancing, fencing and riding. The two latter manly exercises he practised with incessant application, under Angelo, who had lately built a riding-house in Edinburgh, and was not only an admirable master of what he professed to teach, but one of the most polite and entertaining companions, who could render a tea-table a banquet of enchanting vivacity. The young traveller wished also to gain some little insight into one province of learning, which he had

Digitized by Google

not cultivated at Cambridge. He engaged, for this purpose, a mathematical instructor, who attended him at his lodgings, and, to shew the probity of this honest man, a few lines shall be transcribed from a curious rhyming billet, in which he justly reproved his too negligent disciple.

"I come to aid you in the paths of art,
Anxious and earnest well to act my part,
But when I come, my pupil is from home—

* * * * * *

At last in peevish mood, I walk away,
Like actor, unsuccessful in a play.
Dear Sir, compute the worth of time, and health,
How science leads to glory, ease, and wealth.

Remember, too, you breathe in Scotia's air,
Impregnated with art, and science fair.
Here all the streams of Helicon distil,
And a Parnassus, every Scotian hill.

I hope you'll mend, and wait your evening hour,
And I'll rejoice, if my rude lines have power
If not to please, at least to mend the heart:
Pray take my well-meant freedom in good part.

I am, Sir, your most humble Servant,
MATHEMATICUS.

EDINBURGH, 29*th* of *May*, 1767.

This singular billet appeared to Hayley characteristic both of its author and his country, in which sincerity and good intentions seemed at that time to be more prevalent than elegance and refinement. The wish of the honest monitor was perfectly

Digitized by Google

fulfilled, as his pupil was entertained and obliged by his admonition; though more attractive studies precluded him from making any great progress under his mathematical instructor. His friend Stevenson was engaged in the composition of a Latin essay on the Censorship of Rome, and Hayley was anxious to assist him in extending and polishing the work, in the sanguine hope of its obtaining the prize at Cambridge, for which it was a candidate, and successful.

Graceful exercises of the person, and contemplative amusements, engaged the young traveller during his residence in the north, in preference to deep study. Of his compositions at this period no traces remain, except in a sportive rhyming journal, of a most pleasant excursion on horseback; in the course of which the poet and his lively friend Beridge enjoyed an extensive view of the country, visiting Glasgow and Stirling, and the seat of the Dukes of Hamilton, and the Falls of the Clyde. In the course of their ramble, Hayley executed a few slight and rough sketches of the most striking scenery; particularly of Dumbarton Castle, the chapel at Roslyn, and the Falls of the Clyde. He also amused himself and his companion by his description of their fortnight's tour, written by starts, with a pencil, as they advanced in their peregrinations. A few lines of this idle work will afford a sufficient specimen of its style, to which the author seems to have been led by his admiration of Anstey's *Bath Guide.*

> At Glasgow we walk'd, after tea, up and down,
> To see the fine girls of that beautiful town;
> And fortune our eyes with a face entertained,
> Where beauty and grace irresistibly reigned

Digitized by Google

Having seen all the town, which was busy and full,
We retreated, and supp'd very well at the Bull.
After breakfast, next morning, as lovers of knowledge,
The first thing we did was to walk to the college;
And when we walk'd thither, it was our design
To return very soon, and at Hamilton dine;
But as with the Foulis* we form'd an acquaintance,
They shewed us their books, and their prints, and their paintings.
We bought a few books, some Italian, some Latin,
With a neat little sketch, and two prints upon satin.
Thus amused, how the time went we did not perceive,
But found it was two, upon taking our leave.
We asked then our friends, who so civil had been,
To walk up to dinner, with us, at our inn.
But they were engaged, (or they would not refuse us)
To a club, where they begg'd they might now introduce us;
And more to persuade us, they added besides,
Some professors are there, and old Simpson presides.
As an author, you know, due attention engages,
We were curious to see this assembly of sages.
Being then introduc'd, with a very grave face,
We shook hands, and soon took at the table our place.
As the cook had not time for two more to prepare,
The feast was but small, and but slender our fare;
Yet the mathematician's nice conduct and care
So divided the meat, that each man had his share.
But at length there appear'd a more puzzling affair,
And old Simpson demanded, with very great weight,
"How can we divide these three tarts between eight?"
After dinner, the Doctor most archly displayed
The change that in Scotch education was made;

* Two brothers, and eminent printers.

Digitized by Google

That, instead of a good mathematical course,
Panegyrics were form'd to commend the great horse.
At the same time, he shewed, we must fairly acknowledge,
More wit than is commonly found in a college.
When from table we rose, Foulis asked us to tea;
We had still his collection of drawings to see.
A head he then shewed us, the finest I've seen,
Of Mary, the lovely unfortunate queen.
When his drawings, well pleased, we had some time surveyed,
Two agreeable girls said, the tea was just made.
After tea, and some lively chit-chat, we withdrew,
And took leave of our friends, with a hearty adieu!
We then walked to the Bull, our expences to pay,
Where our landlord to Hamilton told us the way;
And, to shew that he held us in high estimation,
He gave us a letter of recommendation.

Hamilton house was one of the objects that afforded the highest delight to the two travellers, who, ever pleased with the society of each other, and perfectly sympathizing in a lively relish for all the beauties of nature and of art, were well disposed to find, in every new scene, a scene of enjoyment. They were completely enchanted by that matchless picture of Rubens, Daniel in the Den of Lions, which is the prime jewel in the collection at Hamilton, and which they were prepared to examine and admire, as Hayley had bought of Mr. Foulis a respectable print of it, very nicely impressed upon satin.

That worthy man and his brother had endeavoured to establish an academy of arts in Glasgow; but not finding encouragement equal to their own zeal and intelligence, they had seasonably,

Digitized by Google

but reluctantly, relinquished their laudable project. The travellers, after devoting as much time as they could spare to the delights of Hamilton, rode to pass the night at Lanark. The next morning, they enjoyed the romantic scenery at "The Falls of the Clyde," and were in some jeopardy among the rocks from their eagerness to scramble into pathless spots, for the sake of seizing the most picturesque points of view. The charms of this wild and fascinating landscape engrossed so much of their time, that they were considerably benighted before they arrived at Linton, the last place where they had proposed to sleep in the course of their return, and whence, to close their excursion with the two final verses of their sportive journal,

> They concluded, next day, riding home at their leisure,
> Their short expedition of infinite pleasure.

It had been their original purpose to extend their ride into the Highlands, and particularly to visit Inverness, for the sake of contemplating the scene of Shakspeare's Macbeth, the darling of every poetical imagination; but their engagements at Edinburgh would not allow them leisure sufficient to indulge themselves in this projected gratification.

Beridge was zealous and diligent in the study of his profession, and took great delight in the lectures of that admirable physician, Dr. Cullen. Hayley had also the pleasure of hearing that celebrated lecturer, as he was glad to seize every opportunity of following the advice of the poetical prelate, Vida, who says to the votary of the muse,

> "Nulla sit ingenio, quam non libaveris artem."

Digitized by Google

The mention of professor Cullen may not improperly introduce a little anecdote of his singular medical sagacity and foresight.

In speaking, one day, on slight intimations of future gout, in the personal appearance of young men, he observed, they were too slight to admit of description; but he added, "if I were required to name any one of the young gentlemen who honour me with their attendance, appearing to me most likely to be attacked by this malady as he advanced in life, I should say Mr. Beridge." The future sufferings and early death of that amiable student of physic, then in the full bloom of temperate youth and vigorous health, proved but too forcibly the penetration of the experienced physician. The cheerful temper and lively spirits of Beridge prevented his suffering any gloomy apprehensions from this remarkable presage. He enjoyed at this time a constitutional gaiety of the happiest kind, as it flowed from goodness of heart, and an active mind that loved to amuse itself in observing all the oddities in human life, and the infinite varieties of character that are continually presented to a traveller's contemplation.

His propensity to such amusement was abundantly gratified in his return to England, in the middle of July, with his friend Hayley; for they agreed to go by sea, and taking their passage in a coasting vessel from Leith to London, they embarked with a motley tribe of passengers, that shewed, in a lively point of view, the diversity of human pursuits. There was a young Scottish physician, going to practise at Aleppo; there was an old conjuring Jew, who had visited all countries; and, to give a

Digitized by Google

little female grace to the society, there were milliners of Edinburgh, going to study new fashions in London.

The captain of the vessel was a hearty, pleasant fellow, who kept all his passengers in good humour, by his cheerful and obliging spirit; so that the voyage, though extended to the unusual length of eleven days, was considered altogether as an agreeable adventure; although it was sometimes suspended by a dead calm, and sometimes diversified by a rough gale, and its unwelcome attendant, sea sickness, in which a Scottish damsel suffered most deplorably: but she was soothed and cheered, under all her discomfort, by the humane attentions of Beridge and his friend, to whom she expressed her gratitude, with a very becoming mixture of feeling and modesty.

The arrival of Hayley and his medical associate in Great Queen-street, afforded no little delight to the kind and anxious parent, who had expected them, for several days, with all the eagerness of maternal affection. Her solicitude was happily repaid by a full history of all their travels, and by that cordiality of filial regard, which she ever experienced, not only from her son, but from every individual who had obtained an intimacy with him.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER II.

COMPOSITIONS IN 1767, LOVE ELEGIES, AND A BRIEF POLITICAL ESSAY IN PROSE.

THE beautiful damsels of Scotland had not supplanted the fair one of Watergate in the heart of her young poet. Several of the affectionate verses that he addressed to her, bear the date of this year, (1767) particularly two little poems; the first, on her birth-day; the second, on his own.

A few lines from the former, and the whole tenor of the last, will sufficiently shew the feelings that reigned in his bosom at this period.

> "While thy glad friends, these happy hours employ,
> In warmest wishes for thy future joy,
> Believe, dear Fanny! that my faithful heart
> Bears in such wishes a superior part.
> While they, with lively mirth, around thee throng,
> Lead the light dance, or join the cheerful song,
> While pleasure o'er thee spreads her soft control,
> And friendship seems to challenge all thy soul,
> O! yet a moment, but a moment, spare!
> Yet think the absent worth a moment's care!
> One thought on him bestow, whose soul sincere
> Joys in thy joy, or trembles at thy fear!
> * * * * * *

Digitized by Google

Oh why, when friendship all her zeal displays,
And revels freely on this best of days,
When ease, and mirth, the general feast prepare,
Why must not love, the nobler guest, be there?
Why doom'd to absence, that afflicting state!
The worst of curses, from malignant fate;
Whose various tortures every pang contain,
The heart can suffer, or the mind can feign!
Envy, whose wish is ever to destroy
The rising promise of another's joy,
'Gainst absent love, her every shaft will aim,
That spleen can poison, or that art can frame.
O! let not Envy's voice thine ear assail,
Or tempt thee to believe my love can fail!
Within thy breast, where softest virtues reign,
A trusted inmate let my truth remain;
And when the circling year this day shall bring,
(Bear it, ye moments, on your swiftest wing,)
O let me, present then, as absent now,
To friendship's wishes add a lover's vow,
That Heaven, on thee, may with profusion pour
Joys after joys, till love can ask no more!

TO FANNY,

ON MY OWN BIRTH-DAY, 1767.

My friends, dear girl, with sprightly festive mirth,
Would celebrate the day that gave me birth.
Say thou, dear Fanny, to whose eyes I bend,
On whom my sorrows and my joys depend,

Digitized by Google

Whose word alone my pleasures must create,
And mark the colour of my future fate;
Say thou, to clear my doubts, sincerely say,
Shall I to pleasure dedicate the day?
Shall I, with joy, salute the rising morn,
Off'ring to Heaven my thanks, that I was born?
Poor is the gift of life; so speaks the sage;
And each sad lesson from experienced age:
Weak man, they tell us, must submit to go
A destined journey thro' the realms of woe;
That all his wishes, as his hopes, are vain,
Since fancied pleasure proves a real pain;
While foreign faction, or domestic strife,
Blasts the fair prospect of delusive life.
Shall I, dear girl, believe this picture true?
No! let me learn 'tis false, and learn from you;
Let those dear eyes with softest lustre shine,
And kindly answer to the vows of mine.
Sadness shall shrink from their inspiring ray,
Like night's thin shadows from the blaze of day;
No dark ideas shall my joys control,
Or shed a gloomy poison o'er my soul;
Peace shall inhabit there, and gay desire
Feed my fond hope, and fan the rising fire.
In vain weak dotards would of life complain,
Of certain trouble, and intrusive pain;
If thou my fair, with hope-inspiring smile,
Will soothe each fear, each anxious thought beguile,
No dreams of sorrow shall this heart enslave,
To Heaven most thankful for the life it gave,
If I for thee, may all that life employ,
And found its glory, on my Fanny's joy.

Digitized by Google

If thou wilt bid me on this day rejoice,
And hail it happy, in a softer voice,
Still shall this day, as circling years go round,
With cordial mirth and grateful verse be crown'd;
Thy raptured poet, in his tenderest lay,
Shall all the transports of his heart display,
Sincerest gratitude with love shall join,
And thy dear charms illumine every line;
Fanny, in sacred ties, my soul shall bind,
And grow more lovely, as she grows more kind.

These verses of the young poet, which were, in truth, sincere effusions of the heart, did not fail to foster in the bosom of his Frances those sparks of reciprocal affection, which they seem to have conceived for each other in their earliest intercourse; still he had great disadvantages to surmount; long absence from his fair one, and some latent enemies.

Love, who once converted a blacksmith into a painter, seems, at this time, to have almost metamorphosed the young poet of Sussex into a politician; as, among his early writings, there appears a little political essay, in manuscript, with the following title-page and the date of 1767:

A FEW THOUGHTS ON THE NOMINATION OF MEMBERS FOR THE CITY OF CHICHESTER.

Superbiæ nobilitatis obvium itum est.

Quod si vos tàm libertatis curam habueritis, quàm illi ad dominationem accensi sunt, profectò nequè respublica, sicuti nunc, vastaretur, et beneficia vestra penes optimos, non audacissimos, forent.—SALLUST: *Bell: Jugur.*

Digitized by Google

It being the interest, as well as the intention, of the people to have a fair and equal representation, whoever brings it nearest to that, is an undoubted friend to and establisher of the government; and cannot miss the consent and approbation of the community.—LOCKE *on Government*, Ch. xiii.

This Essay clearly proves, that an attempt in a certain quarter, to impose two members, arbitrarily, on the city of Chichester, must be a gross violation of the most important constitutional principles.

The Essay certainly breathes the spirit of true patriotism, and shews, that the young author had duly studied the best writers, who have most worthily illustrated the liberties of our country. Indeed, liberty was, at all periods of his life, a prominent subject in the thoughts and affections of Hayley, and he has manifested his zealous regard for this primary blessing, in various extensive compositions of verse and prose. But the little essay in question, may be supposed to owe its origin, as much to love as to patriotism; for it seems intended to gratify Mr. Page, the father of Frances, and the public adversary of the party above alluded to. There is so much pure argument in the essay, undebased by any personal flattery, or any personal detraction, that had the author presented it to Mr. Page, it is possible it might have induced that reserved old gentleman, to treat the young poet with more cordial familiarity and favour, than he had of late seemed inclined to bestow on him. But Hayley had himself, such a degree of reserve and pride in his nature,

Digitized by Google

that he would not present his political work to the very person whom it was most likely to gratify, from a too scrupulous apprehension, that he might be thought eager to ingratiate himself with the old gentleman, from an interested view to the fortune of his daughter. The young poet used to say, with great truth, of himself and his fair one,

> "He loved her for herself,
> Not as the heiress of the rich Priuli."

Yet he had that sort of filial regard for the character of the old Senator, that when it was scurrilously reviled in some electioneering verses, he endeavoured to counteract their venom by an answer in rhyme, composed at the request of his old friend the recorder, Mr. Steele, and entitled, *The Scoffer Scoffed.* In those occasional rhymes, that flowed rapidly from the heart, the poet did not indulge himself in any long eulogy on the father of the damsel he loved, but he frankly said of him,

> All honest men must still revere
> A name to truth and freedom dear,
> And bless the man, who ne'er pursued
> His private, 'gainst the public good.

This and higher praise might justly be given to Mr. Page; but the character of this memorable man was so singularly interesting to Hayley in his youth, that it shall form the principal subject of a new chapter.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER III.

THE FAMILY OF PAGE.

JOHN PAGE, Esq., who repeatedly represented Chichester, in Parliament, was born of humble but industrious parents in that city. Without any of the learned professions, and without the talent of popular eloquence, by a plain, active and vigorous understanding, with the fortunate incident of marrying, early in life, a daughter of the opulent Mr. Knight, (who acquired riches in the year 1720, that ruined so many,) and by obtaining favour and confidence from the Duke of Newcastle, the Prime Minister of the time, Mr. Page gradually became a person of considerable influence and estimation in public life. After the death of his first wife, who had left him only a daughter, he married the heiress of an old and opulent tanner in the vicinity of Chichester. She also died, leaving him, like her predecessor, only a daughter, and that daughter was the gentle Fanny of the young poet. Fanny was two years older than her enthusiastic lover, and at the time when their reciprocal affection arose to its greatest height, her father lived a recluse life in his sequestered villa of Watergate; a scene that he had embellished with singular good taste and frugality, by consulting the genius of the place, and forming simple, pensive walks, in the charming woods

Digitized by Google

with which nature had decorated that lonely spot. The old gentleman, who had been satiated with public life, seemed to have no wish but for rural tranquillity, and to preserve his two daughters single, as his constant companions, and the managers and ornaments of his excellent house, where he occasionally received his neighbours with a kind and temperate hospitality. There was a grave and solemn dignity in his countenance, deportment, and conversation, that gave him the semblance of an old Spaniard. The juvenile poet, when he was eager to obtain the hand, as he had reason to think he had won the heart, of Frances, used sometimes to suppose this reserved and wary old gentleman, a sort of imperious and unfeeling necromancer, barbarously immuring in his castle his two daughters, who might have been much happier in different situations. Avarice was generally believed to be the motive of his keeping them unmarried: but Hayley, in a later season, learned from his godfather, Dean Ball, the private troubles that at this period preyed on the domestic comfort of Mr. Page; and the poet took a manly pleasure, when he advanced in years himself, in bestowing praise on the generous and delicate conduct of his old miscalled necromancer. An incident of his earlier life will shew clearly, that he had no sordid passion for money. Being in France, in his younger days, he had an opportunity of befriending that celebrated empiric Dr. Ward. The Doctor, by some imprudence or mischance, had fallen into the misery of being imprisoned in the Bastile. Mr. Page contrived to extricate the luckless physician, and, in grateful

Digitized by Google

remembrance of that important kindness, Ward left to him, as a legacy, all his medical secrets. These were esteemed so valuable, that Mr. Page had offers of many thousand pounds for these precious mysteries. "No," he replied, "I will give them to the public as a national benefit." He did so, and clearly proved his exemption from avarice, but not his usual profound sagacity; for the recipes, being published, lost their influence on the mind of the public. So true is the maxim of Tacitus, "Omne ignotum pro magnifico est:" a maxim peculiarly true, perhaps, in the general estimate of medicines.

But it is time to direct our attention again, to the poet of Sussex returned from Scotland, and bestowing all his thoughts on his friends in the South. He visited his native county in the autumn of 1767, and seems, at that time, to have established a firmer interest in the bosom of his fair one, as he addressed to her verses on different occasions before he returned to London; a few stanzas, on the nuptials of a lady whom she particularly regarded; and a little poem, in which he speaks in glowing and grateful terms of her attractions and her kindness.

Dear girl! to whom, from early youth,
My heart has with sincerest truth
Its constant vows addrest;
Still more and more, to make me thine,
New graces in thy form combine,
New virtues in thy breast*.

* This stanza is the commencement of a letter, in verse and prose, in which the poet laments his having had so few opportunities to converse with the

Digitized by Google

Thy letter, in my troubled breast,
Has calm'd each fear, and brought me rest,
Like the returning dove;
At every line, my bosom glows;
My heart in rapture overflows;
With gratitude and love.

In a postscript to his impassioned address, he says, "I am now "under some apprehensions, in regard to the conveyance of "this letter, and am unwilling to trust it to the post. From the "many civilities, and I may say instances of friendship, that I "have received from your cousin, and still more from the af-"fection she professes for *you*, I am tempted to beg of her to "deliver it. I love and admire, my dear girl, the delicacy "and ingenuousness of your heart, in what you say upon secrets. "I am, believe me, of your sentiments in great measure; but "there are some secrets that carry their apology along with "them."

The poet, though high-spirited in his notions of honour, felt not the least scruple on engaging Frances in a secret correspondence, because his love had received encouragement from many elderly and familiar friends of her father. They all assured him, that however that cautious old gentleman might affect reserve and dislike, toward such a connexion, at first, yet, if the love of the young couple were truly reciprocal, he

object of his affection, in the last three years; conjures her to indulge him in a continued correspondence, and speaks like a lover, of the letter in which she had thanked him for his verses, on the nuptials of her friend.

Digitized by Google

would, in due time, approve and rejoice in it. The lover was sanguine and confident in this persuasion, and in the summer of 1768, full of lively hopes of success in the prime object of his cordial ambition, he had persuaded his indulgent mother, to pass some time with him in a lodging situated near the cloisters of Chichester cathedral, and the house of their benevolent friend, Dean Ball, a zealous friend to the love which then influenced every measure of his godson. This situation afforded him excellent opportunities both for solitary reading and for social pleasure. For the first, he had a perfect command of the church library, his scene of studious retirement; and for the second, the hospitable mansion, and the affectionate and sprightly converse of the Dean and his daughter Eliza, who were both attached, with equal cordiality, to their new neighbours. As Eliza was the bosom friend of Frances, the sanguine young poet did not scruple to employ that amiable damsel, whom he regarded as a sister, in the delicate private office of presenting his poetry and his letters to her friend. She felt no ground for hesitation in promoting what she knew her own father wished to promote, and what was expected soon to produce the honourable happiness of two persons peculiarly dear to her guileless and lively spirit. The admirable and experienced mother of the poet, remonstrated against all clandestine correspondence; but young lovers, and the young friends of lovers, frequently verify an exquisite maxim of Milton's,

> "And oft, though wisdom wake, suspicion sleeps
> At wisdom's gate, and to simplicity

Digitized by Google

Resigns her charge; while goodness thinks no ill,
Where no ill seems."

In this sweet but perilous state of mind, the poet continued a most interesting correspondence for many months, with his gentle mistress and her confidant his adopted sister. Mr. Page himself, when sounded by the lover's zealous friend, the old Dean, though he declined encouraging an immediate union, spoke kindly of future possibilities; and the lover left Sussex, at the close of the autumn, with the most animated hope, that much had been done in the course of his residence there, to facilitate and soon produce the completion of all his wishes.

He had enjoyed several conferences with his Fanny, he had presented to her, at the deanery, a miniature portrait of himself, executed, for that purpose, by his warm-hearted and admirable friend Meyer, who had favoured him with instructions in his own delicate art, so that he painted, from memory, such a resemblance of his Fanny, as highly gratified his own fervent imagination. In return for this picture she had given him a favourite ring, with an engraved cornelian; and, in one of her letters alluded to his portrait, with a tender generosity of expression that seemed to render his felicity secure. In speaking of some little trinkets that he had sent to her, she said, " I hope you do not think I can " want any thing to keep my absent friends in my mind, " after the present I had at the deanery. If I did, you ought " never to bestow one single thought more on her who is, with " the sincerest regard, your F. Page." In closing another letter, " Nov. 3, 1768, her expressions of attachment were still more

Digitized by Google

" forcible and endearing; " Patience and perseverance will get the " better of all difficulties. I hope, my dear friend, you will not " give way to any uneasy thoughts, nor add to my distress, by " suspecting the steadiness and constancy of your Fanny."

Assurances that he was so firmly beloved by the excellent object of his own long-tried affection, served to console and inspirit the poet, under a severe affliction and various anxieties. His recent affliction arose from the very dangerous illness and imperfect recovery of an old friend, whom he had long regarded with filial cordiality, and who had kindly endeavoured to accelerate his acquisition of his idol Fanny. This friend was Thomas Steele, the recorder of Chichester, in whose friendly mansion, at Hampnett, the young Hayley was ever received and regarded as a child of the house, by every individual of that pleasant affectionate family. The master of it was attacked, this autumn, by a most formidable fever of tremendous length; and though he struggled through it, yet it left deep traces of injury on a noble, manly frame, and fine constitution. The interest that Hayley took in this circumstance, led him to address a poetical epistle on the fear of death, to that singular literary lady, Anne Clarke, a frequent guest to the Steele family, and a zealous friend to the poet. The epistle describes the sufferings and resignation of the excellent man, for whose life the greatest fears had prevailed, and displays the influence of religion over a well-disciplined understanding. The poem closes with high but just praise of the lady to whom it is addressed, and with fervent wishes for her happiness. The lines on Resignation are transcribed, to show the serious style of this early composition.

Digitized by Google

O Resignation! thou unerring guide,
To human weakness, and to earthly pride!
Friend to distress! who canst alone control
Each rising tumult, in the madd'ning soul,
'Tis thine alone, from dark despair to save,
To soothe the woes of life, and terrors of the grave.
Thro' this rough world, assist me with thy power!
Calm every thought! adorn my latest hour!
Sustain my spirit, and confirm my mind,
Serene, tho' feeling, cheerful, tho' resigned!

When the poet composed these verses, he was very far from surmising what a bitter trial of fortitude and patience was impending over his own heart, and in the point where he was most vulnerable*.

* This part of the Memoir is followed by a series of anonymous and other letters, which the editor has thought it better to omit; from a firm conviction, that how interesting soever such documents of a broken-off love affair might be to the writer of the narrative, they could be productive of nothing but extreme irksomeness to the reader of it. It may be sufficient, therefore, to observe, that in consequence of the "dark machinations," as the author styles them, of a concealed enemy (with whose name he yet appears to be unacquainted), the match was entirely set aside.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER IV.

ON THE FIRST CONSIDERABLE LITERARY PROJECTS OF HAYLEY.

THOUGH he seemed to have chosen the law as his profession, by an early entrance of his name in the Temple, Hayley soon found it was a pursuit peculiarly ill-suited to his mental propensities, and to his favourite habits of life. Though he had a mind sufficiently fond of exercising its powers, and able to support much regular application, yet, after perusing a few of the ponderous volumes that form the foundation of a library for a young lawyer, and after several uninteresting visits to Westminster-hall, he was clearly convinced by his own feelings, that nature had never intended him for a barrister; though he could listen, with great pleasure, to fine specimens of forensic argument, and though he felt himself endowed with such faculties as might probably lead him to the acquisition of popular eloquence. The primrose paths of imagination had ever appeared to him infinitely more attractive than the high flinty road of legal science; and he often addressed to his mother sentiments similar to those so beautifully expressed by Milton, in Latin verse, to his Father, and so delightfully translated by Cowper:

> "Thou never bad'st me tread
> The beaten path, and broad, that leads right on
> To opulence; nor didst condemn thy son

Digitized by Google

To the insipid clamours of the bar:
To laws voluminous, and ill observed;
But wishing to enrich me more, to fill
My mind with treasure, led'st me far away
From city din to deep retreats, to banks,
And streams Aonian, and, with free consent,
Did'st place me happy at Apollo's side."

It was from his elegant and accomplished mother, that Hayley caught his early passion for poetry, and particularly for the drama, which his sanguine spirit, and his affection for his generous parent, conspired to make him believe he should convert into such a source of affluence, as would enable him to enrich that beloved parent who was ever willing to devote her own private fortune to his prosperity, and whom he justly thought entitled to all the comforts and all the elegancies of life.

The vivid ideas of poetical youth are ever ready to fabricate the most splendid visions. Hayley, who felt great facility in dramatic composition, and who remembered that Dryden had once engaged to produce four new plays every year, thought himself modest in his purpose of composing *only two* in the same space of time, and moderate in his calculation of deriving only a thousand a year from his dramatic profits. It may prove a useful lesson to juvenile poets, inclined to indulge a similar ardour of fancy and of expectation, to inform them here, that the poet who had thus imagined he should convert the stage into a Peruvian province, after composing many dramas, never derived from the theatre a shilling of emolument. How an author, so generally applauded for his various composi-

Digitized by Google

tions, could meet with such a series of disappointments, we shall see in the progress of this eventful history. But the purport of the present chapter is, merely to mention at what period of his life, and on what particular subjects, he first began to employ himself seriously in dramatic composition. It is probable, that some sketches of tragedy may have perished among the poetical trifles of his boyish days. From a letter of a most respectable literary veteran, whose house Hayley frequented with much pleasure, in his youth, and of whose character he has inserted a grateful memorial, in *Kippis's Biographia Britannica;* from a private letter of the Rev. William Clarke, dated "Chichester, July, 1769," it appears, that Hayley, in the autumn of the preceding year, had submitted to the critical inspection of his old friend, the three first acts of a tragedy, which he was then preparing to finish, entitled, *The Afflicted Father*. The rise of the various incidents of good and evil fortune, that happened to form the destiny of this drama, have been rather extraordinary. The latter may appear in a distant sequel of this narrative, at present it will be sufficient to describe its origin. As Hayley was continually meditating on new and original subjects for tragedy, he chanced to read, in a newspaper, some incidents that struck him as a noble ground-work for his favourite species of composition. A very respectable father had the dreadful misfortune of finding his son condemned for a capital offence. To avoid the shame of a public execution, he had the temerity to supply him with poison; and heard, when it was too late, that his pardon had been obtained. On this slight foundation the

Digitized by Google

poet built his tragedy of *The Afflicted Father*, and with the vanity natural to youthful imagination, he thought it possessed singular merit. "Many tragedies," he observed, "are absolute "incentives to the horrible crime of suicide, but my drama may "be regarded as a pathetic sermon against it." To the subject of this play he had ever a strong predilection. He originally laid the scene of it in Spain. When he completed the two last acts does not appear. Probably the completion of it was suspended by the very affecting occurrences that produced the unexpected catastrophe of his first love, and the cheerful incidents that elevated the poet to the raptures of new and unthwarted affection, to which we shall now devote a new chapter.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER V.

THE SECOND ATTACHMENT OF THE POET, THAT LEADS TO HIS MARRIAGE.

When Hayley had recovered from that excess of surprise and agitation of spirits, which the sudden panic and the last letter of his still amiable though alienated Fanny had occasioned, it was a great relief to his mind to have a prospect of seeing his generous nominal sister* in London, who had nobly sustained and despised the gross insult of the anonymous letter, and the curious assertion, that, from the impropriety of her conduct, no man would marry her. Yet Hayley, who had long entertained for her a most sincere fraternal affection, had so much delicacy of respect for her spotless character, that, on a rumour of her projected visit to London, he wrote to apprize her, by the following letter, of the perils that might attend it.

"Queen-street, 1769.

"To Miss Ball,

"Once more, my dear sister, must I venture to write to you. "It is, indeed, impossible for me to be silent upon any subject in "which you are principally concerned. Miss Clarke tells me that "you talk of passing through London into Devonshire, but that it "is not absolutely settled. I am inclined to suppose, from the

* Miss Ball, so denominated in the correspondence which has been omitted, as explained in the note at page 78, and whose interference in delivering the letters of Hayley, was severely censured by the anonymous correspondent.

Digitized by Google

"excellence of your heart, that your chief inducement to take "London in your way, is, that you may be able to pay a cha-"ritable visit to those friends for whom you have long shewn the "most generous regard. You will easily believe that I long to "see you. I must honestly confess, that I have wished a thou-"sand times you might contrive your journey in such a manner "as to give us that pleasure. But reflection has suggested to me "the impropriety of such wishes. My dear sister will, I dare "say, be greatly surprised to hear, that I am far from hoping to "see her in London this spring.

"Such a declaration must appear very strange, from one who "professes himself bound to you by the strongest ties of grati-"tude and affection; but I will explain to you the reasons which "induce me to speak a language that must seem, at first sight, "so utterly inconsistent with the heart of your brother. We are "but too well assured, my dear sister, that malice has fixed her "eye upon us; and I think it is plain, from what has passed, "that your seeing us here, at this juncture, might be represented "in such terms as we should be very sorry to hear. You may "say, that it is very great weakness to restrain the innocent "warmth of friendship, from a servile apprehension that such "friendship may be vilely misrepresented by some secret foe. "Indeed, my dear girl, such caution does not naturally belong to "the heart of your brother; but having once brought upon you "a very scandalous insult, I consider it as my duty to sacrifice "every pleasure, rather than expose you to the least risk of a "second injury. I can myself despise the utmost efforts of 'malice, but when attacks made against me strike indirectly

Digitized by Google

"upon my sister, experience has fatally shewn me that I feel it "to the quick. I cannot be good christian enough to forgive "those who are so villanous as to speak ill of you; and I can "scarce help lamenting that they are beyond my resentment.

"You see that I write to you on the supposition that the plan "of your journey is not yet fixed; and that it depends on your "own determination. It may, perhaps, be otherwise; but I "could not help laying before you my thoughts, as I feel so much "upon the occasion; yet remember, that in writing to you, I "never pretend to dictate to an understanding which I so highly "esteem. I only suggest reasons; you are to form your judg-"ment, with which it is hardly possible for me to be greatly dis-"satisfied. In the present case, I must be pleased with your "decision, on which side soever it may be. If you pass through "London, the delight that I shall receive in seeing you will "banish from my mind every painful apprehension.

"If, on the other hand, my sentiments have so much weight "as may induce you to alter that plan, I shall lose, indeed, what "has long been the object of my earnest wishes; I shall be for "some time unable to see that generous sister, to whom my heart "is impatient to speak aloud its gratitude and regard, but I shall "have the pride of thinking that I have given up my pleasure for "your security. I shall flatter myself, that by such a sacrifice, "I shall make some little atonement for what is past; and (im-"possible as it appears) I shall, I think, receive from it a satis-"faction superior to that which the sight of you would give "me. Nor will that satisfaction be overclouded by a moment's

Digitized by Google

"apprehension of losing, by absence, any part of your regard.
"The mind of my sister is too delicate to be capable of forgetting
"those for whom she professes an esteem. Many months may
"pass before I shall be so happy as to see you; but I am yet
"vain enough to believe that I shall still live in your memory.
"We are both young, and though I am punished at present for
"my folly, yet I doubt not but I shall pass with you many a
"pleasing hour, and have many opportunities of telling you,
"with as much pleasure as I now do with truth, that your hap-
"piness is dearer to me than my own, and that I am

"Your most affectionate Brother,

"WILLIAM HAYLEY."

The hearts of this artless young couple, were singularly well prepared to convert the feelings of a most pure and generous friendship, into the more powerful sensations of love; and incidents happened to produce this effect with the rapidity and the force of lightning. A clergyman, highly esteemed by the old Dean, Dr. Wickins, the minister of Petworth, had occasion to pass a fortnight in London with some of his children, particularly a lovely daughter near the age of Miss Ball, and one of her favourite friends. They fervently requested the favour of her company during their visit to town, and the request was too pleasing to be rejected. Eliza was now in the bloom of nineteen, frank, artless, modest, and lively. Her features and her voice were equally attractive. Her mind had been cultivated by her fraternal poet, and her heart, that had really suffered in

Digitized by Google

seeing him treated, as she thought, unworthily, was full of a most sincere and disinterested desire, to see him regain a prospect of connubial happiness, not inferior to that which had vanished from his eyes, and those of his friends, in a manner so unexpected and so painful.

As soon as Hayley had opportunities of conversing in private, with his amiable confidant, on the late transactions which had interested them both so deeply, their past sympathy with their altered Fanny, was converted into an impassioned wish to make amends to each other, for all the indignant anguish of spirit that her astonishing conduct had excited in both. The romantic poet exclaimed, in embracing his generous Eliza, "Our enemy has said, my dear girl, that no man will think of marrying you, but I will prove the falsehood of that villanous slander by making you my own wife, if you feel that it is in my power, to render you as happy as you deserve to be."

Generosity and affection prevailed equally in the hearts of the young pair, thus singularly united after their intimate friendship had subsisted a considerable time, without their supposing any possibility of a nuptial union. When Hayley, who never allowed himself to have any secrets concealed from his indulgent mother, first mentioned his new idea to her, the tenderness of maternal affection caught a severe alarm, concerning the deranged parent of the hapless though lovely Eliza. You know, said Mrs. H. to her son, that this sweet girl is almost as dear to me as she can be to you, for I have loved her and her parents for many years; but, my dear William, before you resolve to

Digitized by Google

marry, let me ask you one question! you know the mental calamity of her poor mother; what should you think of your own conduct, if, after you had made this delicate and charming creature your wife, you should ever see her sink into her mother's most afflicting disorder?" My dear madam, (the fervent lover replied,) I have asked my own heart the very question that you now propose to me so kindly, and I will tell you its immediate answer. "In that case, I should bless my God for having given me courage sufficient to make myself the legal guardian of the most amiable and most pitiable woman on earth." My dear child, (the affected parent exclaimed,) "I have done; your heart is very pure, your feelings are quick and strong, your intentions are always kind, I will not thwart your affections, but only pray to Heaven that they may be rendered the source of lasting happiness to yourself. But how can you marry? how provide for a wife? It can hardly be possible without my assistance. Well! I will tell you what you may do. If our good old friend, the Dean, is as much inclined to give you his daughter, as you think he will be, you shall take the two farms, which your father settled upon me in our marriage settlement, and settle them on your wife."

In this manner, did the tender and generous mother of the poet endeavour to smooth his road to felicity, and though aware that he was too apt to despise money to be a very prudent economist, she did not scruple to expose herself to the hazard of indigence, for the sake of favouring the virtuous affection of her enamoured son. Her angelic kindness, and the reciprocal affec-

Digitized by Google

tion that he found in the blooming object of his recent wishes, seemed to lap the spirit of the poet in Elysium, during the fortnight that his Eliza remained in London. To increase his delight, his favourite friend Thornton appeared not a little captivated with the charming girl, who was, at this time, the associate of Eliza, and their little parties of pleasure, to Ranelagh, &c., had all the double interest, that love and friendship can bestow on young mortals, whose tender fancies are full of every thing that promises an inexhaustible fund of future delights. The amiable character of Eliza will appear in her first letter to him, whose painful recollection of past troubles she had now converted into a highly-promising exultation of heart.

To William Hayley, Esq.

"May 11, 1769.

"Mon tres cher Ami,

"By what name can I address you, or in what manner "express my proper sentiments, upon this occasion? The style "of a sister is what I have been accustomed to from my infancy, "and therefore it became very familiar to me; but when I am "desired to write in one more affectionate, I am utterly at a "loss, and have not a single word to say for myself. As this is "really the case, that the sentiments of my heart cannot be ex-"pressed in black and white, I shall pass over them in silence, "and proceed to give you an account of every circumstance, "since we parted, that can afford you any entertainment. The "journey was as pleasant as I expected, and I kept up my spirits "surprisingly, though frequently rallied by my fellow-travellers,

Digitized by Google

" upon my gravity at leaving my friends in Queen-street. They
" left me at Midhurst, and I then offered two women and a child,
" who had been almost jumbled to death on the top of the coach,
" to come in. I had opposite me a very disconsolate young
" man, who, I think, looked more completely wretched than any
" person I ever saw. He breakfasted and dined with us, but
" did not utter a syllable. He really excited my attention
" to such a degree, that I believe I must inquire into his history,
" though I have in general very little curiosity. I think my
" father is much better than when I left him. He expresses
" pleasure at seeing me again. I really felt the same myself;
" but must acknowledge, *that satisfaction* did not overbalance
" my affliction at parting with a friend, who may not possibly
" be thought so near to me, but *I find* it otherwise, and felt it
" severely indeed, the next morning, before I got sight of Miss
" Clarke, who gives me all the consolation and good wishes
" that I could expect or hope for. She says it really makes her
" happy, and advises me, by degrees, to tell my father; as she
" is certain it would make him leave the world, with great satis-
" faction. I shall follow her advice as soon as I have an oppor-
" tunity, but it appears a dreadful task. I think I need not be
" under much apprehension after what I went through yesterday,
" which was the most terrible undertaking I shall hope to meet
" with. I dined at Mr. M.'s with the Miss Pages. Fanny called
" on me while I was dressing. You may be sure the conver-
" sation immediately began with inquiries of various kinds. I
" gave a very true account of your situation, and said I had a

Digitized by Google

"packet which unfortunately was not arrived from Hampnett; "but told her the contents, and added that I had more to say, "but was entirely at a loss how to begin my history. I at-"tempted it several times, without success, till we were just "arrived at Mr. M.'s door, when a fortunate blast of wind sent "Narcissa to my thoughts, and with her assistance I disclosed "the important event. She assured me it gave her infinite satis-"faction, as *I* well knew it was what she had often wished. "That we should both ever find her our friend, and that she "should visit us at Eartham with the truest pleasure. She has "made me promise to come to Watergate as soon as possible, "and says she shall insist on my telling her every thing that "happens, which I am sure you will have no objection to my "doing. The rest of the company laughed at my behaviour, "in general, and said they hoped, when I had been at home some "time, I should recover my senses, but at present they seemed "in a very great puzzle, as I did not appear to understand half of "what was said to me. I am now going to Hampnett, and shall "be able at my return to inform Mrs. Hayley how the com-"missions are approved. I shall just go and call at the Clarke's "with your letter to Fanny, and then prepare for my afternoon "expedition. It is now near one o'clock. Adieu.

"Thursday night.—I am now come up to bed with a satis-"faction of mind which I have not experienced for some time. "I found my father in such good spirits, after dinner, that, upon "his giving me an opportunity, I informed him of your former "attachment being dissolved. I told him that Mr. Page had

Digitized by Google

" held a conversation with his daughter, some time ago, wherein
" he had expressed great uneasiness, and reproached her for
" having engaged herself unknown to him. That his behaviour
" had made such an impression on her, that she promised never
" to proceed any farther, and therefore wrote to you immediately
" to put an end to it. My father expressed himself greatly
" astonished at so uncommon an instance of filial affection,
" which he said, for his own part, he thought unnatural; but as
" long as you were easy, (which *I assured him* you were) he
" was perfectly so. He said very justly, that Mr. Hayley was
" entitled to every thing that fortune and the fondest affection
" could bestow. I joined with him very sincerely, and said, (I
" believe in a trembling tone) that I hoped you would be as
" happy as you deserved to be. Oh! my dear friend, could I
" flatter myself it would be in my power to make you so, I should
" rejoice indeed. I find my father's sentiments, upon this occasion,
" so entirely what I could wish, that it really hurts me to write
" to you unknown to him. The idea of concealment, from a
" person, who, I am persuaded, would grant me every indulgence
" that I could wish, and moreover rejoice at the event, you will
" allow to be somewhat painful to me. I own I cannot help
" wishing him to know it, and think that, whenever he is told of
" it, the intelligence should come from you. These are my sen-
" timents, which I should not deliver with such freedom, did I
" not flatter myself you will be equally ingenuous; for be as-
" sured that your differing from me in opinion, will never give
" me a moment's uneasiness, as I hope ever to hold yours in much

Digitized by Google

"higher estimation than my own. He says, he wishes you to "come into Sussex again, which I told him you proposed next "summer, and he says he shall inform Mr. Page of it, himself, "when he has an opportunity, that he may be under no more "anxiety. I drank tea at Hampnett, and found the family well. "I know not how to conclude, though I really ought to do so "as I am the only person up in the house; but I am free from "pain of every kind. The Clarkes admire your letter to "Fanny prodigiously. I wish you would write to my father, "let the subject be what it will. I give you leave to say what "you please; wonderful indulgence! good night. That you "may now be in a comfortable sleep, shall be the prayer of "your most affectionate,

"E. BALL.'

"Postscript.—Miss W. desired I would give her best com-"pliments and thanks to you and Mrs. H. for your great "civilities to her. I include your kindness to my friend in my "own obligations, which are much too high for me ever to "acknowledge; once more adieu; with entreaties to take care "of your health, and to be as easy as *I can wish* you to remain "till we meet again."

Hayley, whose vanity, as well as his affection, had been deeply wounded by the sudden change of sentiments in the gentle object of his first attachment, was now elevated to transport, in perceiving himself most cordially beloved by a beautiful and accomplished girl, whose spirit and imagination appeared to harmonize with his own. His reply to her opened with all the enthusiasm of exulting love.

Digitized by Google

After a profusion of joy and tenderness, the poet proceeds to consult his new idol on circumstances most likely to accelerate their union, and speaks in the following terms of their respective parents:

"I am highly pleased with your thinking, that when our "views and wishes are told to your father, the information "should come from me. I have one circumstance to acquaint "you with, that may probably produce a little change in your "opinion, and it will, at the same time, afford you infinite sa-"tisfaction, as it pleased me beyond measure. It is this: My "mother has said, that such an explanation to your father would "come best from her, and has given me the greatest reason to "expect, that she will take the office on herself. O my dear "Eliza, what infinite delight will it afford us, to see two worthy "parents, whom we have every reason to love, taking a pleasure "in our union, and deriving new joy, in their decline of life, "from promoting the happiness of two honest hearts, whom "Heaven has cemented in the most virtuous affection. I wrote "a very long letter to our dear friend Miss Clarke, (whom I love "more than ever, since I read your account of her tenderness "towards you,) I explained to her part of my sentiments in "regard to your father. You well know, that my sole reason, "for being particularly cautious with respect to him, is the fear "of his seeing things in a disadvantageous light, and forming a "hasty judgment concerning my attachment to you. Let us "prepare him, by gentle degrees, for what, perhaps, he is very "far from expecting."

The age and quick feelings of this warm-hearted old man,

Digitized by Google

now upwards of seventy made both Hayley and his indulgent mother extremely anxious to prepare his mind, in the most favourable manner, for the surprise that he was soon to experience.

After much tender deliberation on this topic, Hayley resolved to engage, in this delicate office, a most intelligent and zealous old friend of his family, and also of Dean Ball. This friend was Thomas Steele, the Recorder of Chichester. How kindly and successfully he executed the commission intrusted to him, he testified most agreeably in the following letter:

To William Hayley, Esq.

"August 6th, 1769.

"Dear Hayley,

"You cannot give me a more pleasing proof of your "regard to me, than by employing me, without scruple, in any "thing that may contribute to your ease and happiness. Believe "me, my dear boy, there are no two persons in the world, whose "happiness (next to that of my own family) I am so anxiously "concerned for, as that of yourself, and the dear girl with whom "you are going to be connected.

"Upon the receipt of your letter, I went yesterday to the "Deanery, and as I am pretty well acquainted with the state of "my old friend's mind, I had no fears concerning the manner in "which he might receive the account of your attachment to his "daughter. Instead of balancing how much or how little it "might be proper to say to him, I opened the matter at "once, without any other caution, but that of guarding him from "taking it amiss of his daughter, that she did not acquaint him

Digitized by Google

"with the secret before she set out for Devonshire. He re-
"ceived the information with full as much pleasure as I expected;
"nay, I think, rather more: for his countenance, at first, dis-
"covered some emotions of the same kind with those with
"which I have seen it animated, ten years ago, upon any joyous
"occasion. However, this did not last a great while, before we
"fell into a conversation about fortune and circumstances, ex-
"pressing our hopes that you would apply yourself to some
"business or profession, &c. &c., and with this subject our con-
"ference ended.

"I told him of your and your mother's intention to go to
"Southampton, and that you would be glad to give him and his
"daughter a meeting at Amport if it could be contrived with
"convenience. He seemed very well pleased with this, and
"talked, at first, with some degree of resolution, about his own
"journey to Amport; and if he were to set out within a day or
"two, I believe he might be kept up to the performance of it.
"But as the time of Miss Ball's coming home is not yet fixed,
"and there must be a considerable interval, during which his
"irresolute disposition will have its scope, I am afraid, poor
"man! that you must not altogether depend upon having this
"interview with him. However, I shall do my best, to keep him
"up to it, if you persevere in your plan.—Adieu, dear Hayley; if
"you are but half as happy as I wish you, you will have great
"reason to be content with your lot.

"Yours, ever most affectionately,

"THOS. STEELE."

Digitized by Google

The kindness of this excellent and pleasant old counsellor, was equally felt by the young couple for whom he was so cordially interested, his William and Eliza. The latter had travelled from Chichester, on a visit to her married sister in Devonshire, early in the summer. She remained there some months, and continued her affectionate correspondence with the poet, perpetually anxious for her return. It appears from the series of their letters, that, to beguile the time of her absence, he visited Cambridge, and his relation Dr. Gooch, of Ditton, with whom he had much unreserved conversation, concerning plans for his future life. The Doctor warmly advised him to devote himself to the church. He bestowed some serious thoughts on this topic, and also on the profession of physic. From the latter he was cautioned, by the lively but judicious raillery of his friend Beridge, who told him, with humorous anxiety for his welfare, that if he began to study anatomy among the skeletons of Edinburgh, he would soon make a skeleton of himself by pining for his beloved Eliza. His first object was, indeed, to make himself the husband of that blooming, affectionate partner of all his thoughts. His various doubts and deliberations on the professional line of life he should pursue, seemed only to afford an additional example to illustrate the good monitory maxim of a Roman poet :

> Dum dubitas quid sis, tu potes esse nihil.

> While, what thou shalt be, thou art in debate,
> It grows, to make thee any thing, too late.

He sufficiently understood the value of time, to be aware of

Digitized by Google

this danger, but he satisfied his own spirit, by applying to himself the following expressive verses of Cowley:

> Their several ways of life let others choose,
> Their several pleasures let them use,
> But I was born for love, and for the muse.
>
> *Cowley's Destiny.*

No impediments arose to thwart the progress of his new attachment; for his affectionate godfather, the parent of his Eliza, was as eager for the proposed wedding, as the bridegroom himself. That benevolent old man, in despite of his personal infirmities, ventured on the excursion suggested to him by his friend Steele, for the pleasure of meeting his daughter on her return from Devonshire, at his living of Amport, in Hampshire. Hayley had the pleasure of finding him there, and of soothing his impatience, arising from an accidental delay in the journey of his daughter, whom the poet, and a good-natured maiden sister of the Dean's curate, Dr. Sheperd, hastened to meet on her road at Salisbury. They passed a delicious hour, in the gardens of Wilton, in their return to Amport, with the rejoicing Eliza. Having restored her to the care of her delighted father, the poet hastened to rejoin his own indulgent parent, whose tender health had been happily recruited by sea bathing, at Southampton. He speedily escorted her to the Deanery at Chichester, where they were both received as most welcome guests, and on the 23d October, 1769, the lovers were married in the cathedral by the Bishop. That prelate, Sir William Ashburnham, had a voice and elocution peculiarly suited to sacred language. The poet civilly

Digitized by Google

said to him, with great truth, on the close of the ceremony, "It is really a high pleasure, my Lord, to hear any part of the Prayer Book read by your Lordship." To which compliment he oddly answered, "This is the worst service in the church." He meant the worst for recital, but his conjugal vexations gave to his speech all the poignancy of an ambiguous expression. The various influence that this important service had on the future feelings of the bridegroom, the course of this memorial will sufficiently display; so let his wedding terminate this fifth chapter, in the third book of his eventful history.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

BOOK THE FOURTH.

CHAPTER I.

VARIOUS INCIDENTS AND COMPOSITIONS IN THE THREE FIRST YEARS AFTER THE MARRIAGE OF THE POET.—DEATH OF MRS. HAYLEY'S FATHER.

When Hayley entered the married state, he thought most highly of the sanctity and the sweetness of wedded love; and his expectations of deriving from it the purest felicity, appeared, to his own mind, to rest on as sure foundations as mortality can afford. These visible foundations were youth and health, with a decent competence; the fervent good wishes of many friends, and a very uncommon portion of reciprocal esteem and affection in the couple united. The esteem of the poet for his Eliza, had been forcibly expressed in the following verses, composed before he had ever thought it possible that such events could happen as might render her his wife.

TO ELIZA.

I have heard it advanced, and by many confest,
That the friendship of females is merely a jest:

Digitized by Google

I used to suspect, and have now learnt from you,
That the censure was rash, and the maxim untrue.
Self-flattered, self-loved, let the coxcomb alone
Your virtues deride, and be proud of his own;
His contempt of your sense let him vainly profess,
And boast of advantage we do not possess;
Let him think it absurd if a woman pretend
To the truth of a man, and the name of a friend!
But higher by far of your sex let me deem,
And what my heart loves, let my judgment esteem!
O blest be the girl, for such girls I have known,
Whose *soul* all the warmth of true friendship has shewn
In professions sincere, and of passions refined,
With a heart undisguised, and a delicate mind!
To such lovely girls be all happiness known!
Be the joys, they ne'er envy in others, their own!
For such let the wise all their wishes employ,
And shew them that love, they were form'd to enjoy!
Well assured, that by time this plain truth will be prov'd,
She whose friendship 's most firm, best deserves to be lov'd.

The warm language of poetry could hardly bestow too much praise on the heart and mind of the young Eliza; and the poet, who, in the character of her brother, had taken a pleasure in cultivating them with the purest fraternal regard, took still higher pleasure in praising them, when a series of utterly unexpected incidents had made the nominal sister, his wife.

After devoting a few weeks to gratify the feelings of a most hospitable and tender father-in-law, and to receive the congratulations of their Sussex friends, Hayley conducted his wife and his mother, about the middle of November, to their residence in

Digitized by Google

Queen-street. It was no trifling gratification to the poet, to perceive that his admirable parent took infinite pleasure in decorating the beauty of her daughter, and in cultivating her mind. The theatre was the favourite amusement of the domestic trio. It was also a scene of study to the young author, who had determined to apply himself chiefly to dramatic composition. He soon finished his tragedy of *The Afflicted Father*. The sanguine author, and a few of his confidential friends, proposed to themselves much delight, in a prospect of seeing the chief character most advantageously represented by their favourite Powell; as the poet had formed the part of Velasco, with a view to the peculiar excellence of that very pathetic actor. His hopes of seeing this play most favourably introduced on the stage, arose from the following circumstance: It was highly approved by his friend Mr. Garnier, of Wickham, who happened to be very intimate with the manager, Garrick. Garnier had been a school-fellow of Hayley, and had married one of his relations, the eldest daughter of Sir John Miller, of Lavant, first cousin to the mother of the poet. With his usual good-nature and lively spirit, this gentleman engaged to procure the genuine sentiments of Garrick on the merits of the tragedy; and he took the best possible steps for that purpose.

He said to him, "Garrick, I have a play for you, of which I think highly. But you shall judge for yourself. All I ask of you is sincerity. If you think it unfit for the stage, send it back to me with any mark of rejection, and we will pester you no more on the subject: but if you think of it as I do, and resolve

Digitized by Google

to produce it, I will then bring to you my friend, the author. But remember you are upon honour, and engaged not to ask even his name, unless you have previously determined to try the success of the play." After the anxious suspense of a few weeks, Hayley received a most encouraging billet from his friend, to say, that he had promised to carry him, the next Saturday morning, to breakfast in Southampton-street with Garrick, who was delighted with the tragedy.

Saturday morning arrived, and the exulting poet trod on air in his way to the house of the manager. The guests were ushered into a little private room, where Garrick soon saluted them with a profusion of compliments. He said to the poet, "Sir, I have perused your tragedy with great attention and pleasure; I assure you, that I have not seen, for years, any new production of which I could entertain such very high expectation. But we will talk of it more at large some early day in next week, for Mrs. Garrick is now expecting us to breakfast with her and a few friends. Here is a gentleman here, Mr. Hayley, who knows you very well, and speaks of you with infinite commendation. He then named a literary acquaintance of the poet, who instantly said, "Is he with you to-day, Sir? I am sorry for it." "Why so? replied Garrick. "I will tell you very frankly," resumed the poet; "he is a man of admirable talents and most fascinating manners; but he has some very singular peculiarities of character, and he will be deeply, though perhaps not ostensibly, affronted, that I did not engage him, instead of my friend Garnier, to introduce me to Mr. Garrick." "No! no!" exclaimed the

Digitized by Google

courtly manager, "he speaks of you in the most affectionate terms; but come, my dear Sirs, breakfast is waiting for us." The poet and his friend were then ushered to Mrs. Garrick, who presided at her tea-table, with three or four very agreeable literati in her party. The conversation was lively and general; a new appointment was made, in private, by the manager, before Hayley and his friend withdrew, that they should both breakfast with him again on the Tuesday following, and settle all particulars relating to their dramatic business. After breakfast, on the appointed Tuesday, Mr. Garnier said to their host, "Well, Garrick, let us now proceed to your promise! what day have you fixed for the first rehearsal?"

The manager assumed a face in which politeness vainly endeavoured to disguise his perplexity: and, with much embarrassment, he said, "Why, faith! I have not been able to fix a day; I have been re-considering the tragedy: it is most elegantly written, it is a charming composition to recite to a small circle, but, I am afraid it is not calculated for stage effect. However, it shall certainly be played, if you desire it." "O no! by no means," mildly said the poet, with suppressed indignation, at the duplicity of the manager, "I shall instantly put it into my pocket, and I am very sorry, Sir, that it has given you so much trouble." Garrick burst again into a profusion of new civilities, and offers of the kindest good offices upon any future occasion. Mrs. Garrick seemed desirous of soothing the spirit of the poet by personal flattery; and the first hopes of his tragedy thus ended in a farce of adulation. It was a bitter disappoint-

Digitized by Google

ment, to lose the fair prospect of seeing a favourite drama well played; but the mortification was felt much more severely by the wife and mother of the poet, than by himself. During the hubble-bubble rejection of the tragedy, by Garrick, the poet had felt a little like Ariosto when scolded by his father, and instead of lamenting his own defects, he was struck with the idea, what a fine comic scene he could make of the important personage who was giving him a lecture. Indeed, a disappointed poet with his deluded and angry friend, and a shuffling manager and the manager's meddling wife, afforded ample materials for a comedy. But although the laughable group struck the fancy of Hayley, in that point of view, he wrote nothing on the occasion, but employed his vivacity in soothing and cheering the vexed and irritated spirit of his Eliza, whose indignation had been peculiarly excited against Mrs. Garrick, as the manager had incautiously betrayed what ought to have been a secret, of his wife; and was weak enough to say, that *she* thought the tragedy *not pathetic*. This appeared such an insult against the talents of her husband, as the feeling Eliza found it hardly possible to forgive; but a vexation, of a more serious and important nature, soon occupied the thoughts, and most grievously agitated the tender nerves, of that most pitiable sufferer. She was overwhelmed by a sudden discovery, that her father, though still in good health, had ceased to be Dean of Chichester. The mystery was soon explained, in a manner that added the severest poignancy to the vexation of his astonished Eliza. The Dean had been persuaded to resign his deanery to the man who had married his

Digitized by Google

eldest daughter. Many plausible arguments were used, to reconcile the affectionate spirit of the good old Dean, to this very singular degradation of himself; and Eliza, who from her infancy had idolized her sister, would not have felt so deeply wounded as she did by the transaction, had it not struck her tender mind, that the keeping a business of such importance a profound secret from her, was an act of unwarrantable deception towards her from a sister, to whom her heart had been ever most tenderly open. Her present anguish was in proportion to her past affection; she thought her sister had not only deluded her most ungenerously, but irretrievably dishonoured their indulgent old father. This surprise wounded the too vulnerable Eliza so deeply, that she passed the three first nights after the intelligence had reached her in tears, incessant tears! Her husband, though he also felt much indignation against the secrecy of the transaction, endeavoured to tranquillize her spirit, and their excellent friend, Mr. Steele, contributed much to this desirable effect, by some kind, judicious, and admirable letters.

This friendly counsellor endeavoured to mitigate the indignation of the Hayleys against the person who had offended them. Though he greatly disliked that person, he generously said, that the new Dean had immediately and handsomely given to his retiring predecessor the security he had promised for the continuance of the decanal income. He informed them, at the same time, that a promise had been obtained from the kind-hearted old Dean, by his successor, to give him speedy possession of the deanery-house, by retiring to a small mansion, in Chichester,

Digitized by Google

which he had built as a residence for his unhappy wife after his own decease; and as Steele was well aware that this circumstance would be particularly vexatious to Eliza, who had delighted, from her infancy, in the deanery-house and garden, he kindly endeavoured to soften the vexation arising from the loss of that paternal abode, by stating the satisfaction with which the good old man spoke himself of his own intended retirement. It pleased Heaven, however, to spare him the trial of changing his scene of residence, in a manner that might wound the feelings of many. The new Dean could not conveniently remove his family from Devonshire, till many months had elapsed. Dean Ball, in the interim, pressed the Hayleys to cheer him with their society, in a favourite scene, that, in a future summer, would be no longer his mansion. They cheerfully accepted his affectionate invitation; and, during their visit, it happened, on a day which they had devoted to a little party of pleasure by the sea-side, in their favourite village of Felpham, that a messenger recalled them to the deanery, with the mournful intelligence that their old, benevolent, and justly-beloved father had sunk in a fit of apoplexy. Hayley had not the gratification of hearing him speak again; but watched the awful symptoms of death, in a countenance once of uncommon vivacity and good nature!—a countenance long used to cast on him the endearing looks of paternal affection.

This venerable Dean had been distinguished, in his earlier days, for the sprightliness of his mind and his social pleasantry. He wrote lively verses on private and domestic occasions with facility and grace. His patroness was the good old Countess of Derby,

Digitized by Google

who resided, in the latter part of her life, in the old mansion-house of Halnaker, adjoining to Boxgrove, where she founded a school, with other charitable institutions, and built a neat parsonage for Mr. Ball, whom she had made the minister of that parish. This venerable Countess, and the divine she patronised, were equally remarkable for benevolence and hospitality. Each, after closing a long and blameless life, was attended to the grave by the benedictions of many who remembered with gratitude their invariable beneficence.

The grief that Hayley and his Eliza felt on losing so amiable a father, was alleviated by the just reflection, that his advanced age allowed little or no prospect of his long preserving his faculties, which had begun to decline. He had lived a blessed time, to see a most singularly interesting daughter settled in marriage; and, after resigning his preferment, to improve the fortune of his eldest remaining child, he kindly made those additions to the portion of the younger that were thought most equitable by such of his ancient friends as he appointed his executors; with a special charge to provide as much as possible for the domestic comfort of his unhappy wife, for the perfect restoration of whose mind no hopes were entertained; but as her character had been ever gentle, her disorder was not outrageous, and admitted of much placid amusement; particularly from the talent of cutting flowers in paper, with singular dexterity and elegance, a talent inherited by her Eliza. The Hayleys, after adjusting all the private and mournful business that devolved on them after the decease of their revered host, relieved themselves by a visit to

Digitized by Google

Southampton, in October; and, in the next month, returned to their winter residence, in Queen-street.

The poet, though not rendered affluent by the kindness of his good departed father-in-law, yet now felt himself enabled to provide a carriage for his mother, whose health was beginning to decline, and required and deserved the most tender attention.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER II.

OCCASIONAL COMPOSITIONS.

The manager's rejection of his first tragedy had not diminished his passion for the drama, or his hopes of rendering his love of theatrical composition a source of considerable honour and emolument. Among the persons to whom he occasionally confided his dramatic ideas, there was a gentleman of the most fascinating talents, and passionately fond of plays, who expressed to the credulous young poet much indignation against the manner in which Garrick had behaved concerning his first tragedy; and added, "Our managers are sad shuffling cowardly fellows; they will not hazard any expense, except for some drama that has already got a name. Let me advise you to choose one of the celebrated pieces of Racine, or Corneille, or Voltaire; translate and new model it, and offer it to Colman. When you have once gained a footing on the stage, in this easy manner, you may oblige the managers to treat you with more regard." In subsequent years, the unsuspicious poet had reason to believe that this advice was insidious, and given from the artful and envious motive of not wishing him to succeed in a bold original production.

But, at the time the counsel was given, he so highly admired

Digitized by Google

his brilliant theatrical counsellor, that he embraced it with gratitude, and followed it with diligence and rapidity. His choice happened to be the Rodogune of Corneille, an author whom he had read and enjoyed, with his friend Thornton, at college. Hayley was presumptuous enough, to make some alterations in the plan of this renowned tragedy, and to give his performance the new name of *The Syrian Queen.* He finished it, in the early part of the year 1771, and as Mr. Colman happened to live in the same street in which the poet resided, he called on that gentleman, and not finding him at home, sent the tragedy, with a billet, entreating his frank and sincere opinion upon it.

In the course of a fortnight, he received the following civil and judicious reply from his literary neighbour.

SIR,

"I here return you the tragedy of *The Syrian Queen,* "and were I not unfortunately confined at home, I would have "waited on you, to deliver my sentiments of it in person.

"It is generally agreed, that the chief merit of the *Rodogune* "*of Corneille,* consists in the last act, and in the character of "Cleopatra. Cleopatra, however, is, in my opinion, too horrible "for our stage, or even the French theatre, at present. The "play, it is true, is still acted at Paris; but many things are "endured in an old and long established drama, which would "not be pardoned in a modern performance.

"You have, notwithstanding, aggravated the horror of her "character by the additional murder of Adrastus, a circumstance "by which you have also rendered the fifth act itself less

Digitized by Google

"probable. You have, indeed, cured some of the obvious "defects in the part of Rodogune, as it stood in the original; "and yet, taken altogether, I must confess, that Rodogune ap- "pears a less warm and spirited character, in your piece, than in "that of Corneille. The passion of the lovers is cold and "uninteresting in both.

"I make no apology for the freedom of these remarks, be- "cause I doubt not but you wished and expected my sincere "opinion of your piece, of which I should not think it advisable "to hazard the representation.

"I am, Sir,

"Your most obedient humble Servant,

"G. COLMAN."

"QUEEN-STREET, *March 27th*, 1771."

The fortune of his two earliest tragedies, was enough to make a young author, (not deficient in sensibility) recoil from the theatre; but a poet has said truly, "Facit indignatio versus." Hayley, feeling some degree of indignation, that the doors of the two theatres seemed to be shut against him, and persuaded by his own sensations, that he had a considerable portion of native poetic fire in his mind, resolved to display it, in a composition not subject to the caprice of managers, yet more arduous in its execution. In short, he determined to begin an epic poem.

As it was one of his favourite maxims, that a poet, in his works of magnitude, ought to devote his talents to the glory of his country, or, in the words of Horace, "celebrare domestica

Digitized by Google

facta," he selected his subject from the annals of England; and his passion for freedom led him to choose, for his heroes, the Barons, and their venerable director, the Archbishop Stephen Langton, who, by a happy union of valour and of wisdom, established the great charter. His motto, from Pindar, briefly and forcibly expresses the splendid felicity of their exploits;

εβαλοντο φαενναν
Κρηπιδ' ελευθεριας.

"They founded liberty's effulgent fane."

It was probably in the summer of 1771, that Hayley began what he intended to execute as a national poem of considerable extent; for a letter of his most confidential friend, Thornton, dated August, in that year, alludes to his having settled a plan for that purpose,

How highly that amiable scholar thought of the project; how cordially he interested himself in its progress; how painfully the author was prevented from pursuing it, by various interruptions and impediments, this memorial will shew, as it proceeds through subsequent years. In 1771, which gave rise to his first epic design, we have yet to notice two smaller unprinted poems, and each on a remarkable subject.

The first, was a poetical epistle to the mild and elegant Stanislaus, King of Poland, on his recent escape from assassination. One of Hayley's senior friends, of the law, Mr. Montague, had received from his brother-in-law, Mr. Wroughton, the English Ambassador in Poland, a minute narrative of all the interesting

Digitized by Google

circumstances of the King's escape. On hearing these from his friend Montague, the poet founded upon them an epistle of cordial congratulation, addressed to the happily delivered sovereign. The benevolent heart of Thornton was so interested by this poem, that he translated it into Latin verse. The original and the translation were despatched in manuscript to the King, by the favour of Mr. Harris (afterwards Lord Malmsbury) who was then going, in a public character, to Berlin, and kindly engaged to despatch the packet from Berlin to Warsaw. The poet and his friendly translator were full of the most lively expectations, and amused themselves in obtaining, by the aid of Brotherton assisted by Meyer, a good miniature copy, from a large picture of Stanislaus belonging to Mr. Wroughton.

With this decoration they intended to print the epistle, both in English and Latin; but an unexpected mischance induced them to relinquish their idea. The Courier from Berlin to Warsaw, was seized and plundered by the insurgents of Poland. The poem was probably destroyed. As it never reached the Monarch to whom it was sent, the social poets abandoned their thoughts of publication, although the epistle was such a favourite with Thornton, that, in writing to the author before it was finished, he said, "I am vastly pleased with your verses, and shall never have an opinion of the King's taste, if he be not equally delighted with them. My translation can have no other effect, than to set the King at variance with his nobles; his Majesty deservedly commending the English, and the grandees as deservedly abusing the Latin, not having any thing else to

Digitized by Google

judge by, they will think his Majesty a blockhead." After this mixture of kindness and pleasantry, he proceeds to a little verbal criticism, and closes with the following compliment to the poet, whom he ever regarded with the most tender partiality. "All the rest is perfect, and written with an elegance and propriety peculiar to yourself. The King of Poland has met with his Virgil, as well as Augustus."

Another occasional poem, composed by Hayley, in the course of 1771, had a similar fate with this unfortunate epistle, and was destined to sleep many years in obscurity. This was an ode written to befriend the society of decayed musicians, to whose benefit the author intended to devote it, with the music that he hoped to see happily composed for it, to the honour of his musical friend, Theodore Aylward. This admirable musician was a native of Chichester; he had taught music to the poet's Eliza, and afterwards arrived at the honour of teaching the Princesses*. After a blameless and happy life of industry and benevolence, he was buried at Windsor, where he had enjoyed the office of organist, and where he is justly described in an epitaph by his poetical friend. At the time of which we are speaking, he had

* Their royal father was not unobservant of the mild, unpresumptuous merit of Aylward; he was often honoured in being talked to, with familiar good humour, by his Sovereign; and one of his replies deserves to be recorded; "Aylward," said the King, "I am told you are very rich." "So I am, please your Majesty," replied the musician. "Aye, are you so," exclaimed the Monarch, "What have you got? what have you got?" "I am rich," continued the grateful and discreet Theodore, "because I am contented."

Digitized by Google

been made the Gresham professor of music, by the interest of his friend Garrick. Thornton and Hayley, though both ignorant of the science he professed, had the kindness to supply him with a lecture upon it, which his office obliged him to read. It was not scientific, but it answered the purpose. Hayley, who had a most cordial regard for his harmonious countryman, endeavoured to serve him further, by writing a ballad farce, of two acts, which he was to set to music, and produce for his own emolument, by the favour of Garrick; but Aylward, though admirable as a performer and singularly diligent, had little propensity, and perhaps but little talent, for musical composition.

The ballads of the farce, and the ode for decayed musicians, though the author pleased himself with the hope of gracing them both by appropriate harmony, never received their musical completion. The ode was written in a sequestered scene of the Kentish shore; in the little farm of Dandelion, near Margate, which has since been converted into a scene of public entertainment. The Hayleys, while they retained their house in London, indulged themselves in a summer excursion, and generally to the sea-coast; as the poet was anxious to promote the tender health of his invaluable mother, by autumnal sea-bathing, which she pursued as a medicine, and enjoyed as a pleasure. A letter from Thornton, dated August 11th, 1771, thus notices this occasional residence of his friend.

"You are at last fixed in a comfortable retirement, near a pleasant shore, where bathing, exercise, and study divide your time in an agreeable vicissitude."

Digitized by Google

"You enjoy those pursuits, which you have the happy privilege of planning for yourself, the fruits of which, I hope, will not long be withheld from the public. If you invoke any muses, to animate your Barons in their war, or to finish the picture of Liberty, your favourite goddess, call on those who are left disconsolate by the death of Voltaire and poor Gray! I am solicitous to know what posthumous works our English bard has left."

"I hope to hear from you soon, and am anxious to know how your work proceeds."

What progress the poet made in his arduous design, at this season, does not appear; for his letters of this year to his confidential friend have not been preserved: probably not much. He returned to Queen-street in September. The winter was his favourite time for composition: and it is likely that in the winter of 1771, he might devote much of his attention to the national poem, in which his favourite, Thornton, was continually exciting him to advance.

But in the spring of 1772, a mischance befel the poet, which had a severe tendency to impede his progress in all works of the pen and the pencil. On the 1st of May, he had engaged in a party of pleasure, with his friends Beridge and Meyer, to visit the ship of Captain Cook, then waiting in the river, and prepared for her intended voyage with Mr. Banks. The day was tolerably fair, but with a sharp easterly wind. The party proceeded in an open boat to the ship, nearly opposite Erith; and they received infinite pleasure in passing a few hours with the illustrious sea-

Digitized by Google

man, then on board, and preparing to receive, at a late hour of the day, more important visitors to dinner. The poet, however, was so highly pleased with his reception, that he gave his benediction to the vessel in the following

VERSES COMPOSED ON BOARD THE RESOLUTION, MAY 1, 1772,

ON HER INTENDED VOYAGE WITH MR. BANKS.

Thou gallant vessel! ere thy sails unfurl'd
Bear thee to seek an undiscovered world,
While yet thy streamers float in English air,
Let friendship greet thee with a parting prayer!
May all the powers who o'er the deep preside,
Who curb the blast, or calm the swelling tide,
Thy steady course with eyes propitious view,
And smile with pleasure on thy manly crew!
May they with fondest care thy chief caress!
Crown his just hope, his bold adventure bless!
For no blind rage, no guilty thirst of gain
Leads him, in quest of plunder, o'er the main;
No land he seeks, by bigot fury driven,
To feast on murder in the name of Heaven;
For nobler views his glowing mind inflame,
The bright pursuit of science and of fame:
Thou then, brave vessel! to thy charge be just,
Nor sail unconcious of so dear a trust!
When England with parental love shall burn,
Fondly impatient for thy wish'd return,
O then, thy destined course of glory run,
Give to her longing arms her gallant son!

Digitized by Google

Each wish accomplish'd, every danger o'er,
With joyful triumph all thy crew restore,
Safe to the pleasures of their native shore!
So shall thy name in naval annals shine,
And the Centurion's glory yield to thine.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER III.

OCULAR SUFFERINGS—VISIT IN DERBYSHIRE—NEW VERSES—VISIT TO FORD-ABBEY—ACQUAINTANCE WITH WILLIAM PITT, AT LYME—PREPARATIONS TO SETTLE AT EARTHAM.

The day of singular gratification was followed by a day that proved the commencement of sufferings, which the poet felt as a very severe tax on the pleasure he had enjoyed. In his visit to the ship, he had found a bitter easterly wind blowing full on his face; but, as his eyes had ever been remarkably strong, and had never suffered, in any manner, from long exertion in miniature painting, or in nightly reading, he was not aware how deeply they might suffer from that insidious enemy to organs so delicate, the east wind.

He felt no pain in the day when he received the injury; but on the morrow, a most uneasy sensation of itching spread over the balls of both eyes. This he endeavoured to disregard, as it happened that he and his ladies were engaged to dine with Lord Albemarle, the conqueror of the Havannah, who had married a relation of the Hayleys, the youngest daughter of Sir John Miller, and was, at this time, exulting in the birth of a son. It was with extreme difficulty, that Hayley suppressed his sense of the anguish that began to prevail in his eyes, to participate in

Digitized by Google

this friendly entertainment. On the following day, both his eyes were drowned in blood; and he suffered, during many weeks, all the burning pain, and all the cooling discipline, that are usual in the most obstinate ophthalmia. This cruel malady not only annihilates study and amusement, in the season of its rage, but so weakens the tender organs it attacks, that when an apparent cure is at length effected, great temperance in literary occupations, and continual care, are generally insufficient to prevent frequent relapses. So it proved with the poet. He had promised to devote some months of the year 1772, to his highly-valued friend Beridge, who, having settled as a physician, in Derby, and taken a very spacious house and extensive garden, bounded by the river Derwent, was kindly anxious to render his new pleasant abode, the summer residence of his early friend Hayley, and his two ladies. They visited their beloved physician in the beginning of July, and did not leave him till towards the end of September. In the interim, they enjoyed all the delights of hospitable friendship, and all the curious sights of that remarkable country. The poet has left, in a rhyming epistle, to a lady in London, a sportive description of his adventures in the Peak.

In riding by moon-light, on horseback, over the bleak hills of Derbyshire, he suffered again in the eyes; but recovered the use of them enough to copy, in water-colours, two bold sketches of scenery near Matlock, lent to him by that very amiable artist, Wright, of Derby, with whom he began this year an intimacy, that lasted to the death of the painter, who frequently, in his letters, consulted his friend of Sussex on the subjects of his

Digitized by Google

pencil. Hayley made little or no progress, this year, in his chief poetical project; but during his residence in Derbyshire, he produced verses of various kinds—an Epistle to Thornton, accounting for the suspension of his greater work, and one poem that afforded high gratification to his warm-hearted host. This was a martial ode, addressed to that gallant warrior, Colonel Gladwin, and describing a signal effort of his courage, by which he preserved himself and his garrison, when he commanded the fort of Detroit, from being massacred by an insidious party of Indians admitted on a visit, and prepared to execute their murderous intention. Gladwin had served with the rash unfortunate General Braddock, and recovered his gun, when he fell. On his return to England, he married a sister of Hayley's friend Beridge, and at the time of the poet's visit to Derbyshire, the colonel resided, as a happy country gentleman, in a delightful villa in that county; a scene which the poet contemplated with enthusiastic delight, from the wild beauty of the landscape, and the heroic and social spirit of its proprietor. In September, the three travellers returned to their home in Queen-street. From a brief poem composed in Westminster-abbey, and dated 1773, it appears that the mind of Hayley was in that year full of his epic design. The poem opens with the following verses:

Honour's darlings! mighty dead!
While this awful dome I tread,
Where secure of deathless fame,
Sacred marble shrines each name,
Let me catch, with fond desire,
Sparks of your celestial fire!

Digitized by Google

First, ye sons of sacred song,
First, to you, my vows belong;
Visit from your thrones on high,
One who, while his raptur'd eye
Sees you shine in Glory's sphere,
Pants to run your bright career.

He then addresses the chief English poets; and in his invocation to Milton, alludes to the subject, and to the hope he entertained of his own epic song. It was probably in this year, that an incident happened, which the poet used to regret as unfavourable to his great work, and peculiarly vexatious to himself. He had repeated passages from the first and second cantos of his epic poem, to his friend Meyer, who was an impassioned votary of freedom, and so delighted with the verses recited to him, that he fervently entreated the author to let him obtain, from Cipriani, with whom he was intimate, some animated and graceful designs for the poem. Hayley replied, "I thank you for your proposal, but let us first try his powers of design, in one striking subject. A scene lately occurred to my fancy, which I mean to introduce in a future canto; it is a subject that will particularly please you, and, I think, suit the pencil. I will instantly hasten home, throw it rapidly into verse, and bring you the scene put into proper order to excite the talents of your friend." The poet returned to Meyer in a day or two, with sixty new verses, so captivating to the fancy of that lively artist, that he engaged to set Cipriani to work upon them immediately.

Great promises were made, but no drawing appeared. The

Digitized by Google

impatient poet made continual inquiries; various excuses were invented for the delay; and at last, on his insisting upon having the verses restored to him, either with or without a drawing, the vexatious truth was discovered—Cipriani had carried them constantly in his pocket, till he had lost them. A loss the more vexatious, as the author had no other copy, and, though he could not recollect a line of them, was fanciful enough to believe that they were really the very best verses he had ever composed. However that might be, they were gone, irretrievably gone! and never mentioned in future by the warm-hearted Meyer, but with indignant expressions of unavailing regret.

What progress the poet made in this favourite design, during the winter of 1773, does not appear from his manuscripts.

In the summer of that year, he seems to have devoted much of his attention to the impaired health of persons very dear to him; particularly to that of his mother, and his friend Beridge. The latter now fulfilling the prophetic words of Dr. Cullen, concerning his early tendency to gout, had recourse to Bath, at this time, in the hope of relieving many uncomfortable gouty sensations, by the promotion of a regular fit. Hayley and his two constant fellow-travellers hastened to Bath, to cheer their young suffering physician. After some success in that friendly office, they visited Bristol, Clifton, and Monmouthshire, and enjoyed much gratification, in surveying, at leisure, the various beautiful scenes that attracted their notice; particularly Piercefield, and Tintern Abbey. After their return to Bristol, they proceeded by Glastonbury, to Lyme, in Dorsetshire, and secured a neat lodging in

Digitized by Google

that town, for the sake of sea-bathing. Having engaged this residence for a few months, they proceeded into Devonshire, on a promised visit to their old friends, the Gwyns, of Ford Abbey. Mr. Gwyn was a good-natured, easy, English country gentleman, of the ancient style. In his earlier days, he had been long in parliament, and exulted not a little, in having been one of the party who drove that prime agent of bribery, Sir Robert Walpole, from what they called his strong hold of corruption. Mr. Gwyn had been long married to a sister of the Sussex Lady Miller. Having no children, and being a quiet scene, he indulged his wife in all her fancies that would not interfere with his systematic tranquillity. They fortunately sympathized in one good-natured propensity, and were both pleased to render their curious old magnificent abode a scene of perfect freedom and amusement to their friends. It was an ancient abbey, which had been fitted up as a stately mansion, by an attorney-general, in the time of Oliver Cromwell.

That opulent proprietor of the extensive fabric had a taste for splendour. He formed a magnificent saloon, decorated with tapestry and a copious library. The latter was a source of great entertainment, and of considerable concern, to Hayley. He was highly pleased with the opportunity of examining many volumes of great rarity; but equally grieved in observing that they were almost ruined by neglect. The scenery of this abbey, and the society he met there, were peculiarly interesting to the poet. He there became acquainted with Captain Morrison, who had served in India, and with Captain Hood, afterwards Lord

Digitized by Google

Bridport. Morrison was a singular, eccentric character, who published a pamphlet, with a project of restoring the Great Mogul to his ancient splendour, assuming the character of ambassador to England from that sovereign. Under Morrison, Hayley began learning the elements of the Persian language, a study too soon interrupted! To Captain Hood he had other, and not less pleasing, obligations. That pleasant heroic officer continued his civilities to the Hayleys on their return to Lyme; and introduced to them his two relations, the sons of the first Lord Chatham, who, with their tutor, Mr. Wilson, happened to reside at that time in a house nearly opposite to the lodging of the Hayleys, in Lyme. The poet soon became familiar with these interesting youths. The youngest, afterwards the great William Pitt, was now a wonderful boy of fourteen, who eclipsed his brother in conversation, and endeared himself not a little to the poet, by admiring a favourite horse, which he then rode, of singular excellence; and by riding to shew him several romantic spots in the vicinity of Lyme, where the shock of an earthquake, in some preceding centuries, was supposed to have produced a wild and beautiful singularity of appearance in the face of nature. Some of these sequestered scenes had been first remarked and admired by Lord Chatham, who had an eye for all the charms of rural scenery in their wildest neglect.

Hayley often reflected on the singular pleasure he had derived from his young acquaintance; regretting, however, that his own poetical reserve had prevented his imparting to the wonderful youth, the Epic Poem he had begun on the liberty of their

Digitized by Google

country. But, from his early intercourse with this illustrious character, he derived considerable advantage, as will appear at a future period, when Hayley will be found requesting a private audience of the Prime Minister, to plead the cause of a poet, whom he justly regarded as his superior, the excellent but unfortunate Cowper.

The various residences of Hayley might be traced by the footsteps of his muse, as a scene that was new to him generally produced new verses. His pleasures and his studies, his friendship and his love, afforded him inexhaustible subjects of poetry. From Ford Abbey, he sent a sportive rhyming epistle, describing the monastic scenery, to a lady in London. From Lyme, he despatched a longer and more serious poetical epistle, displaying the course of his present life, to his much-esteemed cousin the Rev. John Hayley, of Scotton, in Lincolnshire; an epistle, in which he frankly confesses, though in a season of repose, his high poetical ambition.

The travellers returned to Queen-street before the end of October; and early in 1774, the poet seems to have entertained the idea of relinquishing a settled residence in London, and fixing on the favourite spot of Eartham. Like Cowley, "he loved his old hereditary trees," and he also cherished a cordial hope, that the peculiar salubrity of Eartham air, would give new spirit to the declining health of his mother. There were, however, some obstacles to retard this agreeable project. The house at Eartham had stood untenanted for some years, and of course, had suffered considerably; but within the last year or two, Hayley had

Digitized by Google

rendered it habitable, and let it to an elderly clergyman with a family.

In April, the poet, with his wife and mother, went to visit this tenant, and try if they could induce him to relinquish to them an habitation, not perfectly commodious, but one that it was now their general wish to enlarge and decorate, as their chosen abode for the residue of life. It was soon agreed, that this beloved little villa should be resigned to its proprietor at Midsummer. With what feelings Hayley prepared to settle in a retreat so soothing to his fancy, the following poem, addressed to his Eliza on the subject, may serve to shew.

ELEGY, 1774.

Yes! thou sweet source of my serener days,
  Like thee I pant to quit the irksome scene,
Where, cold of heart, dull ceremony sways
  The wayward sons of vanity and spleen.

Where pomp and penury, in fierce excess,
  Wound, at each turn, the heart that deeply feels,
While the pale forms of multiplied distress
  Hang on each blazing chariot's cumber'd wheels.

Swift come the day, when we shall well exchange
  Thy dust, O London! and thy noisy throng,
For fields where leisure may unbounded range,
  List'ning to health and pleasure's sprightly song!

And thou, sweet Eartham! dear retreat! receive
  Thy fond possessor in no ill-starr'd hour!
Ne'er will he wish thy tranquil shades to leave,
  And fly ignobly to the shrines of power.

Digitized by Google

No, he will wish, (nor let that wish be vain,)
To aid thy charms with independent pride ;
To rear the peaceful grove where love shall reign,
And raise the roof where friendship shall preside.

Perchance, long banished from his failing eyes,
Th' heroic muse will come with all her fire ;
Yes ! in thy shades her sacred form will rise,
And strike to liberty the lofty lyre !

Eliza too, enamour'd of thy bower,
Will make thee, Eartham, her peculiar care ;
And court, to grace thee, every coyer flower,
That yields reluctant to the vernal air.

If aught severe her lovely charge deface,
Her pitying hand will raise the bending bloom ;
Protect the wounded myrtle's rising race,
And guard the infant rose's rich perfume.

Nor this alone, but far superior care
Eliza's gentle, generous heart will know ;
She to th' afflicted cottage will repair,
And sooth the villagers heart-rending woe.

Where'er she comes, with no unkind delay,
The infant tenants will with transport bound ;
Her smile will chase oppressive want away,
And spread a little holiday around.

While thus, lov'd Eartham, in thy fav'rite scene
Our varying seasons of enjoyment fly,
O bid thy spreading foliage haste to screen
Our pure delights from envy's piercing eye !

The residue of the spring was employed in preparations for

Digitized by Google

this interesting removal. The safe conveyance of a considerable library was an important concern to the poet, who, from his boyish days, had regarded a large collection of books as one of the prime luxuries in life. He saw these, and select articles of furniture, safely stowed in broad-wheeled waggons, and on the 24th of June, 1774, the Hayleys arrived to settle on their beloved little villa of Eartham.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

BOOK THE FIFTH.

FROM HAYLEY'S FIRST ESTABLISHMENT AT EARTHAM, TO THE PERIOD OF HIS FIRST PUBLICATION.

CHAPTER I.

THORNTON'S REGRET ON HIS FRIEND'S REMOVAL FROM LONDON—ILLNESS, DEATH, AND EPITAPH OF MARY HAYLEY, THE MOTHER OF THE POET.

The villa of Eartham, when its new inhabitants first made it their residence, was only "rudis indigestaque moles," a sort of rural chaos, compared to the form of simple but graceful decoration which it gradually assumed in the house, and more abundantly in the garden, under the direction of the poet, who had an hereditary passion for the spot. He began, however, his additions to the diminutive mansion, (which his father had built merely as a summer-house for his children,) with more attention to economy and mere convenience than he usually exerted, adding only such offices and chambers as were absolutely requisite for his family. The superintendence of workmen, and the formation of his garden absorbed all his leisure, and afforded him most healthy occupation during the summer and

Digitized by Google

autumn; and when winter approached, he was too agreeably engaged in planning future embellishment for this favourite scene, to wish for a return to the amusements of London. How much his absence was regretted by some of his former associates in the metropolis, we may judge from the following commencement of a letter from his friendly fellow-student Thornton.

"Lawrence End, Sept. 11th, 1774.

"My Dear Friend,

"Our personal intercourse, from which I have many "years derived the highest pleasure, as well as instruction, being "much interrupted,

. ἐπεὶ μαλα πολλα μεταξὺ
Ουρεα τε σκιοεντα,

"we should repair this misfortune by a more frequent corre-"spondence, than we have done during our former and more "short separations: for how shall I miss you in November!

"You cannot half so much regret the loss of Payne's shop, "the theatre, or any of your most admired places of amusement, "as I shall lament the deserted house in Queen-street. Answer "me, then, soon, to the many questions that crowd on my mind, "but principally as to your health and satisfaction; the condition "and degree of your mother's disorder," &c.

These intimate friends, who had much similarity in their circumstances of early life, had much filial sympathy. They had both excellent mothers, who were at this time sinking into

Digitized by Google

those bodily infirmities, that are so apt to overcloud the latter days of mortality, The mother of the poet, indeed, as she her self had predicted, began at first to revive most cheerfully, in the salubrious air of Eartham: but as winter approached her malady increased, and singular incidents arose, which, as they gave rise to a wonderful calumny against her son, it may be proper to relate minutely, as a moral lesson to shew the monstrous absurdities and impudence to which calumny can proceed. Slander could hardly devise an anecdote more improbable, than that a son, who was known to have lived on the most affectionate terms with an admirable mother, at last occasioned her death by cruelly turning her out of his house in a season of severity; yet this report was spread by a gentleman, who spoke, as the poet hoped and believed more from folly than malice, as the person alluded to had obligations to him, and still more to his incomparable parent. The worst of injurious falsehoods are those which are built upon a narrow basis of truth. It is certainly true, that the poet sent his mother from their new residence towards the end of November; but he did so, from a most tender and anxious desire to preserve her life, which appeared to him in some danger from the following very singular circumstance. Among their Chichester friends, they often saw an extraordinary and accomplished old gentleman, of the Molesworth family, who had studied medicine in Holland in his youth; and though too affluent to practise as a physician, he often bestowed advice on his friends. He gave a prescription to the mother of the poet, which he described as a most efficacious remedy for her com-

Digitized by Google

plaint, and desired her to send for the ingredients to the shop of a chemist. She did so: and soon afterwards the trusty William, a kind-hearted old servant of the Hayleys, came to his master and said—"Sir, I think it my duty to tell you a surprising circumstance: when James, (a footboy of the family) went to Chichester for this new medicine, the master of the shop said to him: "For whom, my lad, do you want this medicine?" "For my mistress, Sir," replied the youth: "For your young or your old mistress?" resumed the careful chemist. "For my old mistress, Sir," said the messenger. "Then by Heaven, (exclaimed the man of medicine) she will kill herself, if she does not take very great care." Hayley, on hearing this incident, immediately addressed his mother with great anxiety and affection. He said, that he had reason to apprehend the remedy recommended to her by Mr. Molesworth, was a drug of great efficacy, and such as required peculiar caution. If she was very desirous of trying it, he entreated that she would take it under the immediate direction of their kind old friend and physician, Dr. Hucks, then residing in Spring Gardens. "This," he added, "you may easily do; you have only to take nurse with you in the coach, the coachman and James will of course attend you, so you will have a comfortable equipage in town, and a commodious lodging may be instantly procured. Your health is our primary consideration; and even the journey may be beneficial to you at this time, because Eartham, at present, is not so well secured against the inconveniences of a cold season, as we hope it soon will be." The excellent mother felt all the kindness of this suggestion, and

Digitized by Google

approved the plan. She reached London, had a commodious habitation there, saw her favourite physician, and thought herself so much better for this exertion, that she bought a new gown the very day before her insidious malady put an unexpected and sudden, yet placid, end to her invaluable life; for she expired in her sleep, on the 3d of December 1774.

So died, at the age of 56, a woman, who, as a daughter, a wife, and a mother, had passed through signal trials of her tenderness and her fortitude, supremely amiable in every character, and through all the scenes of her diversified destiny universally admired and beloved! Perhaps the simple but energetic expression of that faithful old nurse of the poet, who passed so many years in her service, may give the most lively idea of her peculiar endowments: "My mistress, (said this affectionate old domestic,) my mistress ought to be the queen of the whole world." Majesty, indeed, was the characteristic feature both of her countenance and her mind; but it was majesty so softened by the sweetness of benevolence, that it never appeared imperious or ungentle.

Her son often endeavoured to express his deep sense of her various excellencies in his poetry; but never satisfied himself in his delineation of a character so infinitely endeared to him. He was gratified, however, not a little, in finding that his friend Gibbon most cordially applauded the verses that relate to her, in his *Epistles on Epic Poetry*, addressed to Mason. The great historian, in a letter to Mrs. Gibbon, his truly respectable

Digitized by Google

mother-in-law, has borne the following honourable testimony to the filial tenderness and veracity of the poet.

"Are you not delighted with his address to his mother? I understand that she was in plain prose every thing that he speaks her in verse."—GIBBON's *Posthumous Works*, Vol. i. p. 559.

It was indeed impossible for the poet to bestow more praise on his inestimable mother than she had merited from him: for left as she was a young widow, in all the bloom of beauty, she rejected many alluring offers of marriage, and devoted all her own excellent faculties to the cultivation of his mind and heart; and in that tremendous illness of his childhood, when the most eminent physicians supposed, that if his life could be saved, yet his senses must be irretrievably destroyed, she seems to have rescued him from destruction by the purity and firmness of her confidence in the mercy of that God, to whom her fervent maternal prayers were continually addressed.

But to return to the period of her decease: her son on the sudden arrival of the mournful tidings, hastened to imprint a last kiss on those still beautiful though inanimate features, that had so long used to look upon him with angelic benignity. He consigned her remains to the sepulchre of his father, in the churchyard of Eartham, and after several fruitless endeavours to satisfy his own feelings in her epitaph, trying both English verse and Latin prose, he fixed on the latter, concluding it with a line from Statius, because it seemed to him to express, with inimitable energy, the uncommon fervency and force of her maternal affection.

Digitized by Google

Juxta hoc Marmor requiescit
Thomas Hayley armiger,
cum Filio Infante;
His, quos in vitâ fidissime colebat,
In sepulchro iterum adjuncta est
Maria Hayley:
Uxor inculpabilis, Parens amantissima.
Hoc qualecunque Monumentum
Patri, quem parvulus amisit,
Et Matri, quæ vidua infantibus
Solicitè semper invigilans,
Utriusque Parentis officio fungebatur,
Filius consecravit;
Filius, quem solum illa superstitem
"Visceribus totis, animoque amplexa fovebat."
MDCCLXXV.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER II.

OCCASIONAL VERSES OF THORNTON AND OF HAYLEY.

The shock of losing such a parent was deeply felt by her son, yet many circumstances led him to contemplate the mercy of Providence in her release; for though she suffered no acute pain, her oppressive malady rendered her life burthensome to herself, and a source of discomfort to the singular sensibility of her daughter-in-law, who, though she had real compassion for all sufferers, had not, from the wonderful irritability of her nerves, that calm and quiet fortitude, which, in contemplating the sufferings of the sick, grows more and more able to soothe and relieve them.

The kind sympathy and constant correspondence of Thornton proved on this, and indeed on all occasions, a source of comfort and gratification to Hayley. From the letters of these two cordial friends it appears, that the spirits of each, which had suffered by domestic affliction, (for each had lost and nearly at the same time, a very affectionate mother,) were enlivened in the beginning of 1775 by a cheerful incident, the marriage of their pleasant early associate in college, Mr. Clyfford, a character of genuine Cambrian simplicity, with a warm heart, a cheerful temper, and a mind of perfect integrity and benevo-

Digitized by Google

lence. He had so much the spirit of his country, that Hayley, to whom he particularly attached himself on his first residence in Trinity-Hall, had sportively given him the title of Sir David Gam; and it was singular enough, that his father afterwards purchased and left to him, some of the landed property which had belonged to that memorable Welshman. The friendship that Clyfford had formed both with Hayley and Thornton, became more and more intimate as they all advanced in life. The poet settled him in his Queen-street house, by assigning to him on easy terms, the lease of that house and some articles of furniture; and there he retained even after his marriage, his juvenile title of Sir David, by which appellation his two familiar friends and his wife ever continued to distinguish him. A letter from Thornton to Hayley, dated January 28th, 1775, opens thus:

"Lincoln's Inn.

"My Dear Friend,

"Much satisfaction did your affectionate letter, this "instant received, afford me! The complete recovery of your "wife and your own health and spirits, are so many sources to "me of cordial happiness. True it is that Sir David has grafted "marriage upon his long courtship, and if it be a just principle "that the passion should have a sufficient time to take root "before the union be formed, our friend has satisfied the maxim "in its fullest extent."

In subsequent letters he bestowed much and just praise on the mental charms of the bride, who proved indeed a warm-hearted friend, and a most sprightly companion.

Digitized by Google

Thornton's praise of matrimony, and his own very sweet domestic character, induced his correspondent to recommend to his notice a very lovely damsel of Sussex, to whose charms he was so far from being insensible, that he composed and applied to her, the following imitation of a little poem that he particularly admired of the President Montesquieu.

THE PORTRAIT.

1.

To Zara still her beauties are unknown;
But hidden from herself alone:
With charms profusely blest,
Candour, benevolence, and peace
She studies to increase,
Regardless of the rest.

2.

The hyacinth thus raises not her head
Above the flowers around her spread,
Unconscious of her sweets;
And in the humble vale would die,
Unless the curious eye
Sought out her lone retreats,

3.

Her passions glow, with temperate desire;
Constant and calm, as vestal fire,
And as the altar pure:
Her eyes which dangerously shine,
To earth their beams decline,
Unwilling to allure.

Digitized by Google

4.

Nature, whose simple hand the virgin drest,
On her bright countenance imprest
  The image of her mind:
By sense enlightened and amused,
Timid, but unconfused,
  Ingenuous, tho' refined.

5.

Parental love! resign thy sacred trust,
For thou hast been completely just,
  And perfected the flower:
Fond Hymen shall mature the fruit,
Whence other plants may shoot
  To deck thy richest bower.

It appears, from the following passage of a letter from Hayley to Thornton, that these verses and some others were written, while their amiable author was on a visit to his friend at Eartham, in the summer of 1775.

"EARTHAM, August 10th.

"Your letter gave me great pleasure; indeed, our chief "amusement since your departure has consisted in thinking "and talking of you, and the little poetical legacies you have "bequeathed to us. *The Portrait* we have often contemplated, "and still with increasing pleasure, which I attribute partly "to its intrinsic merit, and partly to our cordial regard for the "author and the person whom it so clearly resembles."

This person was the youngest daughter of the amiable family at Hampnet, a villa between Eartham and Chichester.

Digitized by Google

Hayley had suffered so deeply from repeated inflammation in the eyes, that he was for some years precluded from deep and regular study, by which he had hoped to advance in his literary projects of extent and magnitude. Yet his active spirit never wanted occupation. His native propensity to poetical composition, and the cordial interest he took in the joys and sorrows of all his intimate friends, conspired to produce many occasional verses. From a collection of these, although they were composed merely to enliven the passing season, it may not be improper to insert in this narrative, such as are best adapted to display the character of their author, and of his most intimate friends. In 1775, he addressed to his favourite, Thornton, an extensive epistle on marriage. The following description of that amiable man, and of the lovely girl whom Thornton also celebrated under the name of Zara, seem to have peculiar claims to a place in this volume.

> O justly valued from our dawn of youth,
> For gentlest manners and for genuine truth!
> To thee, my Thornton! still my heart o'erflows
> In careless numbers, as sincere as prose.

After describing the delights and the dangers of wedlock, and sketching some modern nymphs, not likely to confer happiness on their husbands, the poet proceeds thus:

> These, if we trust what saucy wits declare,
> These are just portraits of our modish fair:
> But O! let friendship to thy curious view
> Paint a warm picture of a different hue.

Digitized by Google

Which in the softer light of rural ease,
Shines a sweet contrast to such nymphs as these:
A gentle heart, incapable of guile;
A face, where candour sweetens every smile,
And beams benignant from the decent eye,
Mild as the radiance of an evening sky!
Free from each sordid care, each low desire,
And subtle vanity's misleading fire!
A mind for love, but not a changing mind;
Constant, tho' tender, and tho' firm, refined;
O'er which soft modesty has sweetly drawn
A veil so lovely, of such lucid lawn
As holds th' observant eye in wonder tied,
And doubles every charm it seems to hide;
While sensibility, sweet beauty's soul,
Glows in each grace, and animates the whole.
How form'd my friend such treasure to possess!
With sense to value, and with love caress:
While fresh from nature's hand her rising youth
Bears the rich blossom of untainted truth,
Which seems to ask affection's generous care,
To shield it from the world's malignant air.
What joy, with such a partner of thy way,
Thro' various learning's pleasant paths to stray!
To beauty's sparkling eyes each flower disclose,
That sweetest in the field of fancy blows!
How would'st thou justly form with judgment chaste,
Her thought congenial, and her rising taste;
Still fondly pleased in that dear glass to find
The soft reflection of thy polished mind!

Friendship, already in luxuriant thought,
Feasts on the vision that her zeal has wrought,

Digitized by Google

And sees thee happy to the utmost scope
Of every ardent wish and anxious hope.

'Tis vision all; for modest doubts control
Too much, I fear, the softness of thy soul;
Thy heart by diffidence too strongly swayed,
Will dread to question e'en a partial maid,
Lest the cold fair one, or ungentle sire,
Damp thy warm hope, and quench the gathering fire.

O groundless fear! What can the perfect fair,
What can the fondness of a father's prayer,
What more expect from favouring Heaven to flow,
Than Heaven, my Thornton, would in thee bestow?
Virtue, which every milder grace attends,
Health, independence, virtue's pleasing friends,
A heart above low passion's base control,
A cultured mind, a sympathetic soul:
These are the springs, that from a source divine
The darkened stream of human life refine;
These make it sweetly glide, and brightly shine,
And these, my Thornton! these are truly thine!

While Hayley was prevented by a variety of circumstances from advancing in any of the extensive works that he had planned for the public, he pleased himself with the idea of rendering his brief occasional poems conducive in some degree not only to the immediate amusement, but the lasting happiness, of his friends. The two following were suggested by this sentiment, in consequence of a visit that he received at Eartham, from the Clyffords, in the spring of 1775. In contemplating the interesting characters of this new-married couple, he observed that the lady, with

Digitized by Google

a very warm heart and an excellent understanding, had a little propensity to fits of melancholy, and to fits of connubial altercation, which he was anxious to counteract by the influence of benevolent rhyme. His friendly purpose was kindly felt, and the moral verses really produced a beneficial effect.

ODE TO CHEERFULNESS,

ADDRESSED TO MRS. CLYFFORD ON HER RETURN TO LONDON FROM EARTHAM, 1775.

1.

SPIRIT benign! who mild and gay,
Lov'st from each mass of human clay,
  To clear its gloomy leaven;
Who, like a seraph shining here,
Bring'st with thee to our grosser sphere
  The purest airs of Heaven!

2.

O Cheerfulness! whose wings display
The radiance of unclouded day,
  Swift to our friend repair,
Who dearly prized, tho' lately known,
Has made our willing hearts her own,
  And reigns unbounded there!

3.

The change from calm and cool retreat,
To London's baneful noise and heat,
  May wound our sprightly guest;
Then all thy healing sweets dispense,
And shed the freshest dews from hence
  Upon her fainting breast.

Digitized by Google

4.

Tell her, that born of love and health,
Thy treasures are the truest wealth,
And make the diamond vile;
Tell her that music's sweetest sound
In thy enlivening voice is found,
And beauty in thy smile.

5.

Howe'er the dazzled eye they strike,
Tell her that wit and mirth are like
The comet's dangerous fire;
They, kindled by the breath of praise,
With momentary splendour blaze,
But in that blaze expire.

6.

While thy superior vestal flame,
Still undiminished, still the same,
No stormy winds destroy:
That certain star by Heaven bestowed,
Guides us thro' life's tempestuous road,
With safety, peace, and joy.

7.

If yet the partial fair esteem
Delusive fancy's transient beam
Above thy constant fire;
Tell her, that friendship, to control
That error of the youthful soul,
Thus wak'd the peaceful lyre.

8.

Her mind which all the graces share,
May still address its ardent prayer
To fancy's glittering shrine;

Digitized by Google

But let thy spirit, heavenly maid!
Her bosom's inmost folds pervade,
And bid her heart be thine.

A MATRIMONIAL BALLAD.

Ye wives and ye husbands, who both wish to see
Your conjugal scenes from all skirmishes free;
In this does the secret of harmony lie,
Ne'er begin a duet, e'en a half note too high!

Ye ladies! tho' vext, your mild spirits may be,
Yet kindly beware of a keen repartee!
For peace's soft bosom those arrows must hit,
Which doubly are pointed with anger and wit.

Ye husbands! of argument chiefly beware!
That bane of good humour which frightens the fair,
For reason's soft tones soon in passion are drowned,
While happiness trembles and flies from the sound.

O! both have a care of all hasty replies,
On hearing whose discord the bachelor cries
(While snugly he smiles on himself and his cat,)
'The sharp notes of marriage are worse than the flat.'

In unison sweet will your voices agree,
While both are maintained in the natural key;
Thus love shall beat time with a conjugal kiss;
And your skirmish be only the skirmish of bliss.

The year 1775 produced several of these impromptus, by which the poet enlivened his retirement; but none seem to require insertion in this narrative, except such as particularly display the feelings of his heart, and the tenor of his life.

Digitized by Google

The present chapter may close with a few verses addressed to Mr. Thornton, as they will serve to shew the mutual delight, which the two intimate friends took, in adorning the scenery of Eartham, and in their social intercourse.

TO JOHN THORNTON, ESQ.,

ON RECEIVING FROM HIM A PRESENT OF PLANTS—1775.

HEALTH! love! and joy! with constant care extend
Your guardian pinions o'er our distant friend;
Who while he views, with just discerning eyes,
Whate'er the vegetable world supplies,
Culls every fairer flower, and favourite sweet,
To grace the limits of our loved retreat.

To us, my generous friend, thy plants arise
With richer fragrance, and with brighter dies,
Because, while bending with the wind they play,
Their whispering foliage says, or seems to say,
"Thy friend, who bade us in these scenes unfold
Our Indian odours, and our tints of gold,
Joys in this spot, where social pleasures dwell;
And oft will visit what he loves so well."

O frequent here at eve, and early morn,
Enjoy that garden which thy gifts adorn!
Sweet are thy flowers, which, charming every sense,
The sweets of friendship with their own dispense.
But far more sweet, the florists here agree,
The living language of a friend like thee.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER III.

AFFLICTION IN THE DECLINE AND DEATH OF HAYLEY'S OLD FRIEND, MR. STEELE, THE RECORDER.

THE house of Hampnet had been a sort of secondary parental house to Hayley and also to his Eliza, both before their union and after it. In the year 1775, they made it a rule to visit it every Sunday evening, because their arrival never failed to impart some degree of animation and pleasure to the declining spirits of their elderly affectionate friend the Recorder. He, indeed, and his tender wife, were both so endeared to the Hayleys, that in a letter to Thornton, dated August 27, 1775, the poet speaks of them in the following terms of filial attachment:

"We had yesterday an unexpected and agreeable visit from "our aged parental friends, and heard a good account of the fair "traveller in the North. Her younger brother is to be despatched "about Michaelmas, as an ambassador to conduct her home. "Our aged Recorder grows old indeed; his health has been long "on the decline, and I now begin to fear it is gone for ever. We "seem to read the grave in his countenance. 'La sua teneris-"sima moglie' appears better than usual. The excellence of "her affectionate mind seems to supply her with health and "spirit, in proportion as he wants her assistance. She came "partly to thank me for a few verses which I had lately sent her. "I will transcribe them for you, because I know you join with

Digitized by Google

"me in admiration of the person to whom they are addressed. "But I must first tell you, that she had desired me to lend her "BALLARD'S *Memoirs of Learned Ladies.* I sent a note with the "book, and the following lines were a part of it.

When Eden bloom'd, and man was young,
(As Milton has divinely sung,)
The lovely mother of our race,
Adorn'd with innocence and grace,
As near a limpid lake she strayed,
Her new enchanting form surveyed;
'Twas beautiful: she joyed to view it,
But for her own she little knew it.
So in th' amusing book, I send,
With fond regard, my gentle friend,
You will, in colours clear and warm,
See female virtue's perfect form:
But far more diffident than Eve,
Tho' often told, you'll scarce believe,
That virtue's charms most clearly shewn,
Are the reflection of your own.
Yet don't deny a truth we feel
Confirmed by love, and conscious Steele!

The poet was not mistaken in his painful presage concerning the approaching death of the Recorder. In the following letter to Thornton he related that affecting event.

"Monday Morning, October 2, 1775.

"MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,

"The sight of your letter last night relieved me from "much anxiety, for having just lost one valuable friend, I began

Digitized by Google

" to tremble for the safety of another. Steele expired on Fri-
" day. I sat up with him the night before he died. At eight in
" the morning the physicians declared that he could not live
" an hour; yet I had the mournful office of watching his de-
" parting breath till four in the afternoon, when he left this
" world without a single pang. I loved him sincerely; he had
" a most affectionate and valuable heart. You will easily believe,
" that my regard for him, and the very weak state of my eyes,
" must have rendered the office I have gone through particularly
" severe. Indeed it was one of the most painful trials that I
" ever experienced; yet I knew no one to whom it so justly
" belonged. His own children and nieces were worn out, and
" less familiar than I have been with scenes of this nature. I am
" indeed amply rewarded for it, not only by that internal satis-
" faction of mind which attends the performance of every severer
" duty, but still more by the unbounded expressions of gratitude
" and affection from all the house; and particularly from Mrs.
" Steele, whom, you know, I have long loved and admired as one
" of the most amiable of women. No human mind can feel a
" loss more severely; but I trust in Heaven, that the fortitude of
" soul which she has derived from a life of uninterrupted tender-
" ness and virtue, confirmed by the purest spirit of religion, will
" continue to support her. Mais hélas! cette tendre, cette aim-
" able fille, qui ne sait pas à ce moment, qu'elle a perdu son
" père! How will she bear the afflicting news? how will she feel
" the wound imbittered by the reflection, that she was absent
" from a most affectionate parent, when he most probably might

Digitized by Google

" wish to give one last embrace to a child whom he so passion-
" ately loved.

" The idea overpowers me; and my eys are in all respects
" totally unfit for writing. Adieu! therefore, my dear friend,
" let us have the comfort of hearing from you very soon. My
" dear Eliza, who has shed many tears on this occasion, joins
" with me in kindest love to you. Farewell!"

Thornton truly sympathized with the mourners on this occasion but kindly observed in his reply to Hayley, " Time
" naturally weakens the strongest impressions of sorrow, and
" will soften yours for the loss of so valuable a friend, even
" though your reason should not, as I trust it will, anticipate
" this slow but certain effect. In truth, I rely so much on your
" strength and firmness of mind, that, sincerely as I know you
" loved Steele, I feel less for you than for his female relations,
" whose nerves are more unequal to the shock."

Much genuine and deep sorrow was indeed felt for the loss of this truly valuable man, and especially in his own house.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER IV.

VISITS TO LONDON, DERBY, LINCOLNSHIRE, HERTS, AND SOUTHAMPTON, IN 1776.

HAYLEY regarded his friend Thornton, as so peculiarly formed to enjoy and adorn domestic life, that he frequently expressed a very fervent wish, both in prose and rhyme, to see him happily married; unconscious of the very different destiny that awaited this singularly amiable man, from a cruel internal malady, which had not yet begun to display any of its baleful effects, though it probably arose early in his delicate frame, and gave perhaps that mild endearing seriousness to his character which induced his intimate friends to give him the title of the little philosopher. He often sighed for the comforts of connubial life, but a sublime spirit of fraternal affection and charity induced him to sacrifice his wishes, and devote his life and fortune to the relief of a sister unhappily married, and to the support of her indigent offspring.

This serious duty involved him in continual anxiety, and to use one of his own tender and forcible expressions, all the little sunshine he had in life he derived from his friends of Eartham. In that scene and its inhabitants he particularly delighted. He was partial to the compositions of his early fellow-student, whatever their subject might be, and often excited Hayley to resume those suspended works, which frequent inflammation in the eyes

Digitized by Google

had severely interrupted: but the poet's eagerness to get rid of so vexatious a complaint, probably contributed to its continuance: by trying various applications that promised to give strength to the eyes, he seemed to perpetuate instead of exterminating the infirmity, and thus during several years he was precluded from great literary exertion. The year 1776, he chiefly devoted to visits of friendship at a distance, as well as to preparing Eartham for the reception of friends. The month of February he and his Eliza passed with the Clyffords, in Queen-street. In the spring, they accepted a kind offer from Mrs. Steele, to inhabit her vacant villa, at Felpham, while their house at Eartham was painted. This circumstance increased an early predilection of Hayley for his favourite marine village, endeared to him by a remembrance of his mother, who was partial to the scene, and had often lodged there with her son, in his juvenile days, for the convenience of sea bathing, in which he greatly delighted as a most amusing as well as salutary exercise.

From the letters of Thornton it appears, that as the summer of 1776 advanced, Eartham became the seat of social and poetical pleasure. The little philosopher himself, and an elder bard, the excellent Mr. Sadleir, of Southampton, contributed to a collection of sprightly songs and verses that were highly amusing to the guests of Hayley in that season, but intended merely to excite a smile in the passing day, they aspired to no longevity. Towards the end of August, the Hayleys were induced to take a very long journey, for the pleasure of congratulating their friend, Dr. Beridge, at Derby, on a most seasonable

Digitized by Google

marriage, that restored him from a state of perilous discomfort to health and happiness. The heart and imagination of Hayley were most feelingly live to the blessings of friendship; and on this occasion, he addressed the following ode to the very pleasing bride of his revived fellow collegian.

In ancient Rome, the pride of earth,
The seat of valour, and of worth,
  Where patriot virtue reigned,
Who e'er redeemed in martial strife
A citizen's endangered life,
  A crown of glory gained.

But O! for thee, thou guardian fair!
Let joy a brighter wreath prepare,
  Her flowers let fancy give;
Let friendship bless with grateful vow,
And bid them on thy lovely brow
  In tints immortal live!

It is thy due; for thou alone
(With pride the mighty debt we own,)
  Hast bid our terrors end;
Bid us each trembling doubt dismiss,
And raised to life, to health, to bliss,
  Our death-devoted friend.

When Bath denied its hoped relief,
Our eyes with unavailing grief,
  His fading form surveyed,
The baleful fiends, disease and care,
Fixed, like Prometheus' vulture, there,
  And on his vitals preyed.

Digitized by Google

But now, with what delight we find,
The nerves new strung, th' enlightened mind,
And all the friend restored;
While health the cup of joy supplies,
And pleasure sees, with sparkling eyes,
That beauty crowns his board.

Yes! generous fair! thy power prevailed,
Where medicine, friendship, nature failed,
Thy virtues brought relief:
When love fix'd here thy gentle reign,
Thou cam'st with this enchanting train,
And happiness their chief.

O while to merits great as these,
Friendship the fairest crown decrees,
That joy has skill to frame;
I teach, along our distant vale,
The echoes of the southern gale,
To breathe thy honoured name:

And long may love, with laughing eyes,
Observe thy genial influence rise,
Thro' every cheerful hour!
Long may our friend with pride confess,
And with increasing rapture bless,
The wonders of thy power.

Let him to nuptial Juno raise
The sprightly notes of festive praise,
And for new aid implore her!
Let him the marriage god adore,
And due libations freely pour,
To Hymen the restorer.

Digitized by Google

The visit to Derby was productive of various delights. Hayley not only sympathized in the happiness of the restored physician, but in the weeks that he passed under his friendly roof, he had the gratification of cultivating an intimacy with Wright, the admirable painter, of Derby, who, having injured his health by too assiduous an application to his art, had great comfort in the kind attention he received from the friendly physician, and took a pleasure in executing for Hayley two hasty little portraits in chiaro oscuro, of Mrs. Beridge and her husband, after painting for the Doctor the poet of Sussex and his Eliza. From the house of their happy friends, the Hayleys made excursions into Yorkshire and Lincolnshire; first, to visit a brother of their host, who lived in the remains of a castle once inhabited by John of Gaunt; and, secondly, to pass a day with their cousin in Lincolnshire, the Rev. John Hayley, who had often invited them to his retired village of Scotton, where the agreeable surprise of finding with him two lovely daughters of his friend Sir William Anderson occasioned the following impromptu:

We thought, dear cousin, in your cot tofind,
An anchorite to solitude consigned;
But O! we find you in far different case,
Music and beauty your gay banquet grace,
We catch our hermit at a Turkish feast,
And nymphs of paradise surround the priest.

Hayley had hoped to be rejoined at Derby by his friend Thornton; but as business precluded that excellent man from taking his full share of pleasure in contemplating the domestic

Digitized by Google

enjoyments of the well-married physician, the travellers in taking leave of Derby went directly to the residence of Thornton in Hertfordshire. After cheering their beloved little philosopher in his old château, they passed a fortnight in London, where they had this year acquired a new delightful friend in Romney; as Hayley has recorded in his life of that celebrated artist, whose first portrait of the Sussex poet was finished by his devoting some days to the painter, before he proceeded on his return to Eartham. For that return he took a circuitous road, for the sake of visiting his friends of Southampton, where passing through Salisbury he reached Eartham on the 22d of October. His satisfaction in returning to such a home, which even in his absence he had taken care to embellish by the formation of an extensive mount in his garden, may be conjectured from the first sentence of a letter from Thornton, that met the traveller in the moment he entered his own house.

"I may now congratulate you on your return to Eartham, and likewise upon the pleasing reflection, that in all your various and extensive rambles, you have seen no spot comparable to it."

Hayley had inherited from his father a passion for the spot so fervently admired by his friends; he had also inherited from the same active parent, a passion for building and gardening, for pictures and for books, united with a contempt of money romantic and imprudent. Literary occupation was one of his chief pleasures, and as he was naturally inclined to cherish the most sanguine hopes in every pursuit, and wished to devote his life to various enterprises of literature, he was willing to believe that

Digitized by Google

the success of his productions, would ultimately repay him for whatever he expended in decorating a favourite scene of study and retirement: but the severe and obstinate disorder in his eyes had such a continual tendency to impede all his literary projects, that, as he observed in one of his letters to Thornton, his attempt to become a successful author, sometimes appeared like the preposterous attempt of the man who undertook to run a race sewed up in a sack. Still however he maintained a constant hope, that time would perfectly restore to him those delicate organs, which being originally free from all defect, and peculiarly strong, had suffered only by repeated inflammations and perhaps a rash use of too many remedies.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER V.

INCIDENTS AND POETICAL COMPOSITIONS IN THE YEARS 1777 AND 1778.

In the beginning of 1777 he endured considerable pain from an excrescence within the lower lid of his left eye. His medical friend Long very kindly hastened to Eartham, and performed a successful operation for his relief; to which the poet alludes in the following commencement of an extensive epistle to that highly useful and agreeable guest, in which he expatiates on the various talents of his friend, and his own poetical ambition.

Health to the friend who passed a wintery way
To save with healing heart our visual ray,
And bid these eyes, to lettered ease restored,
Dispel the weakness they have long deplored;
Thy stars propitious, not alone impart
The useful knowledge of Machaon's art,
To close the wound, to aid the failing sight,
And bless the darkened eye with golden light;
'Tis thine, no less, with sense and fancy joined,
To pour new lustre on the lettered mind:
'Tis thine, with humour's laughter-loving power,
O'er spleen to triumph in the social hour:
Thine to irradiate life's amusing dream
With mirth and friendship's intermingled beam:
'Tis thine, dear Long, if in thy honest praise,
Our motley muse may steal chirurgic phrase,

Digitized by Google

With critic probe the deep defects to pierce,
And brace the sinews of lethargic verse;
With skill to cut each peccant part away,
And render sound the poem or the play.

Five years have nearly passed since fate decreed
I from the field of letters should recede:
Perchance in pity to the world, who still
Are sorely galled by many a grey goose quill.

'Twas at the season when with glory fired,
To high Parnassus all my hopes aspired,
The host of heroes there encamped to join,
To claim the honours of their foremost line;
And on the forked mountain's topmost mound,
Triumphant bid an epic trumpet sound.
But dim obstruction damps my rising fire;
Lost in the mist, I from the charge retire;
Retire reluctant, and like Ajax pray,
For light to lead me to the doubtful fray.
My prayer less happy than the Greek's to Jove,
Still round the mountain's foot I darkly rove,
Changing with tender song or light epistle,
The epic trumpet to a childish whistle.

Once as I sauntered idly round the field,
The arms of satire 'twas my chance to wield,
Thy kindness bade me lay those weapons by,
Too apt to wound the hand from which they fly,
And cease with arrows of envenomed verse,
The mitred raven of our church to pierce.
For such a combat could no fame bestow;
Too slight the subject, and too mean the foe;

Digitized by Google

One sacred debt to bleeding friendship paid,
I blest thy counsel, and thy voice obeyed.
Unable to indulge my epic dream,
I still have dozed by Lethe's silent stream ;
Or else no more on high achievements bent,
Have sauntered round my peaceful grove content ;
And aiming only, on the lap of ease,
With sportive song her vacant ear to please,
New whimsies still beguiled the passing hour,
The young plantation, and the vernal bower ;
Its happier aid thy pencil joys to bring,
And lasting pleasures from that fountain spring.
Thy pencil gives to friendship's warm request
The speaking semblance of her lovely guest ;
Nor this thy praise alone, to catch with care
The line of nature and the living air ;
Thy tints reflect imagination's rays :
In fancy's boundless field thy pencil plays ;
Thy magic pencil, potent to combine
Extremes, that Hogarth tried in vain to join
To win the willing mind by different ways,
And laughter now, now admiration raise ;
Sketching in strokes beyond the reach of rhyme,
The tale of humour or the scene sublime,
Thy generous pencil with amusement fraught,
Turned from these weaken'd eyes my drooping thought :
These eyes forbid their labour to pursue,
But not the wonders of thy hand to view,
While in my sight thy fair creation shone,
Charm'd with thy words, I grieved not for my own.

At length, my friend, thy happy skill supplies
Beams of bright hope to these recovering eyes ;

Digitized by Google

Hope to re-enter by thy generous aid,
Those fields of learning where they fondly strayed.
Those flowery fields from which, in darkness torn,
Long years of exile they were doom'd to mourn!
Thy lively spirit bids my wakened mind
Resume the mightier plan it once designed:
The patriot lay to public worth devote,
And swell to liberty the lofty note.

My love still lasts indissolubly strong
For sacred freedom, and immortal song:
Still fiercely burns with spirit still the same,
My young ambition for a poet's name:
Nor do I vainly think that prize to gain
By light effusions of a poet's vein;
Odes, tales, and sonnets, on the instant penned,
To hail the guest or cheer the distant friend!
These mushrooms raised for momentary mirth,
Should fall the minute that succeeds their birth,
In friendship's circle tho' they still increase,
Quick let them die! and to their manes peace!

The author proceeds to descant on the loftier productions of poetry, and to sketch the character of the true poet, as delineated by the amiable Gresset. He then introduces Chaucer and his principal successors. As the present epistle was never intended for publication, Hayley was induced to insert some passages from it in the epistles on history, that he addressed to Gibbon, and still more in his subsequent epistles on epic poetry addressed to Mason, whom he exhorted to build a national epic poem on the freedom of England. This was for several years the darling pro-

Digitized by Google

ject of his own fancy; when it arose, and how it sunk and revived by turns in vicissitudes of health he has described in the following passages of this private poetical epistle:

When first, dear Long, my boyish rhymes exprest,
Poetic rage arising in my breast,
To soft Melpomene I breathed my sighs;
She shone the idol of my youthful eyes.
The fair enchantress to my dazzled view,
Shewed in the stage, the treasures of Peru.
Swift by her flattering grant I seemed to hold,
Wide fields of glory in that realm of gold.
I haste like sanguine Raleigh to explore,
The mine expected of unfailing ore;
Like him I sail upon a fruitless chase,
The promised mine is ruin and disgrace.
Swift from dramatic dreams my spirit rose,
Stung with indignant pride, it fiercely glows,
And keenly darts an eager glance along
Expanding regions of heroic song.
Anxious to see if that distinguished field,
Ungathered laurels may to labour yield;
To see what spoil its giant sons had gained,
What vacant spot for glory yet remained.
The epic muse to aid my wishes flew,
And led her champions all before my view.

After describing the principal epic poets of his own country, the author proceeds thus:

While led by fancy in a soothing trance,
My steps around the epic field advance;

Digitized by Google

While I survey each chieftain o'er and o'er,
And every confine of the plain explore,
Arrayed in light see Liberty descend!
My glorious guide! my patroness and friend!
Tracing a circle with her blazing spear,
Here! (cries the goddess) raise thy fabric here!
Build on these rocks that to my reign belong,
The noblest basis of heroic song!
To thee this sacred spot untouched I give,
Here bid thy ramparts rise, thy glory live.
Fix here! and while thy growing works ascend,
My voice shall cheer thee, and my arm defend.
Eager I listened, while her high behest
Shot purest rapture thro' my burning breast,
Pure as the joy immortal Newton found,
When nature led him to her utmost bound,
And clearly shewed (where unborn ages lie)
The distant comet to his daring eye!
Pure as the joy, our young forefather knew,
When blissful Eden opened on his view,
When first he listened to the voice divine,
And wondering heard "This Paradise is thine;"
Not less delighted with my new domain,
I blessed the goddess by whose gift I reign.
From her fair hand my charter I received,
While my gay heart with young ambition heaved
To build a temple to her hallowed name,
Above the Greek, above the Roman fame;
Of English form the sacred dome to rear,
And bid our country with just rites revere
The power who sheds in her benignant smile,
The brightest glory on our boasted Isle!

Digitized by Google

The author expatiates on the frequent disappointments of poetical ambition. He vindicates, however, the natural love of fame, as a propensity most graciously given to man by his Maker, and productive of infinite good. In the close of the epistle he describes his own feelings on the subject, and concludes with expressions of regard to his critical friend :

Yet shall my heart, with warmer spirit fraught,
Still fondly cherish this enlivening thought ;
This dear idea, that perchance when time
Has stopt the current of my copious rhyme,
When this fair garden, and the flowers we rear,
Bloom but to deck their master's mournful bier :
Nay, when this scene itself by friendship planned,
This mansion graced by her enchanting hand ;
When Eartham, lovely villa! meets the fate
That levels castles of superior state ;
E'en then, perchance, bright liberty may give
Our verse to flourish, and our name to live.
Time may these honours to our hopes allow,
That in some tranquil spot, like Eartham now,
Where social friends, who scorn the pomp of power,
To attic pleasure give their evening hour.
Our song may win regard; our epic rage
May please that Eartham of a future age ;
From unborn beauty, yet to fancy dear,
Draw with soft magic the delightful tear ;
And thro' the bosom of far distant youth,
Spread the warm glow of liberty and truth.
O thou whose animating voice inspires,
Whose judgment guides me, and whose fancy fires,

Digitized by Google

If, while thy friendly powers its flight sustain,
Our daring verse this distant height may gain;
If our indulgent stars have now decreed
Futurity our finished work shall read;
If haply then the studious wish to find
The various traces of its Author's mind,
O may these lines, howe'er ungraced with art,
Yet bearing still the image of his heart,
Survive to tell, tho' freedom still appeared
The darling idol that his soul revered,
He bowed to friendship with as fond a zeal,
Proud of the purest warmth her vot'ries feel;
Raised, in her honoured name, this grateful song,
And pleased inscribed it to her favourite Long.

This memorial has already mentioned the time when Hayley began his poem of *The Charter*, and the various obstacles that forced him to suspend it. Thornton, who had taken a warm and early interest in this design, never ceased to remind his friend how anxiously he wished for its advancement. In a letter dated, March 15, 1777, he says, "I am impatient to see "Robertson's History; but much more to hear that you proceed "with *The Charter*. It has positively slept too long." The poet's neglect of his favourite subject had been very far from voluntary, as it was chiefly occasioned by the sufferings in his eyes, which rendered him unable to proceed in such historical researches as he considered necessary for the completion of his work, since he intended to annex to his poem a biographical account of the barons most instrumental in obtaining the great charter, and particularly of the Primate, Langton, whom he regarded as the

Digitized by Google

leading spirit of those exalted patriots. The poet had early enriched his library with all the books that could illustrate his subject; but was long obliged to abstain from such use of them as he was eager to make. It appears, however, from his reply to Thornton, on the 25th of March, that the poem was not absolutely relinquished, for the author says, "As to the work, for "whose progress you so kindly express a great degree of im-"patience, Heaven only knows if it will ever have a con-"clusion. I have indeed resumed it lately, and just finished the "third book; if my eyes, which are very far from being strong, "do not fail me again, I intend to transcribe these three books "in a legible hand (a state, by the way, in which my writings "seldom appear,) for the inspection and mature judgment of a "few particular friends when we see them here."

Hayley accomplished his intended fair transcript of this first part of his poem, which, according to the sketch of his plan, was to consist of nine books. Thornton was very zealous for its completion; but various impediments that will appear as this narrative advances, and above all, the early loss of that beloved encourager of his studies, who had taken a peculiar interest and delight in the origin and progress of this frequently-interrupted poem, conspired to prevent the poet's accomplishing his design; although the three first books had been so highly commended that he added to them a preface, and a lyrical dedication to his country. It was not, however, his purpose to print a fragment of the work. He cherished a lively hope at that time of completing the whole; and if his destiny did not allow him opportu-

Digitized by Google

nities of finishing what had been regarded by his friends as a work of national importance, he wished his commencement of the performance to appear in his posthumous poetry, as a proof of his having fervently desired to devote such talents as he possessed to the liberty and honour of his country.

In 1777, he read with lively interest the recent historical romance of Marmontel, *Les Incas*, and was so highly pleased with the eloquent philanthropy of that engaging author, that he composed a little poem in his praise, under the title of *An Epistle from the Inca of Quito to Monsieur Marmontel;* it opened with the following lines:

Brave son of generous France, by justice led
To praise the virtues of the injured dead;
The veil of dark hypocrisy to rend;
Religion's advocate, and nature's friend—
To aid with elegance their plaintive cry,
While murder threatens in the bigot's eye;
His cross of mercy, persecution's rod!
Rapine his law, and avarice his god!
Well dost thou paint, in horror's deepest hue,
Those fiends that tore the vitals of Peru.
O Marmontel! while such thy manly aim,
Thy work is virtue, thy reward is fame.

The poet was rather partial to this production, and pleased himself with the idea of its leading him into an agreeable intercourse of letters with a foreign writer of distinction, whose various publications he had long admired. This appeared the more probable, as he had an immediate and favourable oppor-

Digitized by Google

tunity of sending the poem to Paris by a young friend, the eldest son of the deceased Recorder, Mr. Steele.

Hayley had the gratification of assisting this sprightly son of the man whom he had cordially lamented, under some petty perplexities, and facilitating his excursion to France, to which he had been invited by the late Duke of Richmond, who wrote a friendly letter to him on the decease of his excellent father. To this young traveller the poet confided his epistle to Marmontel, accompanied with a very affectionate letter of moral advice to the traveller himself, on his critical season of life, and the perilous scene he was preparing to visit. His sprightly and social spirit would have derived much pleasure from a successful execution of his poetical commission; but unluckily Marmontel happened to be far distant from Paris, and the epistle never reaching him utterly disappointed the benevolent intention of its author, who thought it too inconsiderable to be committed to the press.

His recent intimacy with Romney, who had now endeared himself to Hayley by a kind visit to Eartham, and by cordial admiration of that favourite scene, made the poet resolve that his first poetical publication should be devoted to animate the genius and promote the reputation of that aspiring yet diffident artist. With this view he composed, in 1777, his *Epistle on Painting*. The composition was deliberately criticised in London by his two associated friends, Thornton and Long, whom the poet sportively called his Aristotle and Longinus. They kindly bestowed much time on the task, and by their friendly remarks, they contributed not a little to the improvement of the poem. It was published

Digitized by Google

by Dodsley, in 1778, and very favourably received by the public. Lord Hardwicke spoke of it to Romney in terms of high commendation, and suggested a few ideas, of which the author availed himself in the second edition, sending a copy to his Lordship with a sonnet of gratitude, to which that accomplished nobleman returned the following polite billet :

"WREST, September 2, 1779.

"SIR,

"Allow me, in plain prose, to thank you most sincerely for "the very elegant compliment you have made me in verse, which "I no otherwise deserve than by having done justice (in common "with other lovers of the art) to your excellent poem.

"I think you have improved it in your new edition, and I "shall be happy and pleased, I am sure, to read any future pro-"duction of so promising a genius.

"I am, Sir,

"Your most obedient humble servant,

"HARDWICKE."

The joy that Hayley felt on the first success of his poem, was overclouded by the most painful apprehensions for the life of his kind and zealous critic Thornton, to such a degree, that Mrs. Hayley, in writing to their sick friend in Hertfordshire, on the 4th July, 1778, expressed the anxiety felt for him at Eartham, in the following words: "The illness of our dear critic has entirely "banished the poem from our minds, and would teach us (did we

Digitized by Google

" require such a lesson) that fame without friendship could afford " but little satisfaction."

Their highly interesting friend revived from this attack; but how deeply it affected him, may be conjectured from the commencement of his letter to Hayley, on the 9th of the following August:

" Though nothing, except seeing you, is more delightful to me " than writing to you, yet nothing is more difficult to me; your " letters overpower me; I wish to shower upon you every " blessing in life, and am unable to make you any return what- " ever. This to a mind of my sensibility is very affecting, and I " have often sat down to write, when the thought of your ex- " treme kindness to me has made me so weak, that I have laid " aside my pen, and could not make use of it. Illness gives a " tenderness to the affections, especially a length of illness; my " thoughts have been upon my friends, and I have wished to live " for the enjoyment of their society. I remember in a letter of " Pope's, he says, 'though in Heaven we have somewhat better " than a friend, on earth we have nothing comparable to it.' In " truth, I have experienced so much kindness, so much genuine " affection from those friends, whose love I wished to be assured " of, that the joy arising from it has been a compensation for all " my sufferings. My illness has been very tiresome and very " discouraging."

This amiable sufferer was restored to enjoy in a particular manner the prime wishes of his heart, the pleasures of friendship; for on his revival he repaired to Brighton, and from that

Digitized by Google

place conducted his friend Sargent to Eartham, and saw him in consequence of that visit enamoured of a young Sussex lady, whose character and accomplishments afforded him the fairest prospect of matrimonial felicity. The joyous sympathy of friendship was never more agreeably conspicuous, than in the countenance and language of Thornton, in one memorable morning, when he and Hayley escorted the bridegroom elect, on horseback, to the summit of a Sussex hill, to give him his first view of that ancient castle and fair domain of which he was to become the proprietor, on receiving the hand of the young lady whose heart he had won.

Thornton leaped from his horse in discovering this prospect, returned his devout thanks to Heaven for having lived to enjoy a minute so delightful to his feelings, and declared a resolution to commemorate every anniversary of that morning.

The lovers looked cheerfully forward to a speedy union, but some difficulties were thrown in the way of the intended marriage. Hayley had the pleasure of counteracting a very artful adversary of his young enamoured friend's, by the assistance of that singularly benevolent mortal, Jonas Hanway, who was not only his old acquaintance, but a relation to the lady in question. These interesting concerns induced the Hayleys to conduct the intended bride, first to London, and then to Halsted, in Kent, where the parents of Sargent resided. When all circumstances were put in a proper train for the purposed wedding, by the good Jonas, Hayley sent the two ladies into Sussex, under the care of Sargent; remaining some little time in London, under

Digitized by Google

the friendly roof of Mr. Arnold, the brother of Sargent, for the purpose of adding some touches to a new tragedy, on an Indian subject, which he had written in the course of 1778, and which his friend Meyer had requested Harris, the manager, to receive.

Thornton, who had returned to his Hertfordshire woods, was far from forgetting in his solitude, the friend in whose nuptial prospect he had taken such cordial interest. On the 8th November, 1778, he wrote as follows to Hayley, then in London, and preparing his tragedy, entitled the *Viceroy*, for the theatre.

"My very dear Friend,

"Delighted was I in the extreme at your account of "the Halsted expedition, and your perfect understanding with "the benevolent Jonas, whose ideas and wishes on this affair so "happily harmonize with yours. Your thoughts which have "lately run in this new stream, may now return to their former "channel, and addict themselves awhile to Melpomene, till "Hymen again recall them to celebrate his rites at the joyful "nuptials. In the mean time, you are new modelling your "*Indian Lady*. I have read Mr. Bitaubé's *Discours sur le* "*Merveilleux*; it is ingenious and interesting, but I think gives "few useful or important instructions for a modern epic poem. "He is convinced that a good, as a true epic poem may be con-"structed without machinery, though he is sensible of its "advantage and ornament to such, who have had it in their "power to introduce it happily. His machinery resembles, I "think, yours in *The Charter*. Apropos of this same charter, "this godchild of mine, I do earnestly recommend you to take

Digitized by Google

" some little notice of it this winter, and not unnaturally to " abandon your offspring, who merits all your care and paternal " attention.

" Every additional sprig of laurel which you acquire gratifies " my ambition, as fully as if the praise derived to me from " my own personal merit.

" How do your eyes? I have had no *contretems*, except one " bad night; but the mischief is, I lose in one night all the " strength I gain in a fortnight. It brings to my mind an " expression of Petrarch—

' Agevolmente si perde in un momento
' Quello che in molti anni à gran pena s'acquista.'

" So it is throughout the whole of human life. Adieu! Let " me hear from you soon, and tell me what news from Eartham " and Lavington.

" I am, my dearest Friend,
" Yours very affectionately,
" J. B. THORNTON."

The tidings from Sussex were such as could not fail to gratify the benevolent Thornton; not so those from the theatre, although the critical friends of Hayley had entertained very high hopes concerning his new tragedy. Harris, notwithstanding the friendly zeal and importunity of Meyer, rejected the play, and assigned a most ridiculous reason for his rejection; a circumstance more vexatious to the friendly critics, because the poet, who had cherished from his boyish days a passion for dramatic poetry, recollecting his two disappointments from Garrick and

Digitized by Google

Colman, had, by a singular precaution, endeavoured to render a fresh dramatic attempt peculiarly interesting.

For this purpose he had sketched complete plans of three tragedies, entitled, *The Viceroy*, *The Siege of Palmyra*, and *Edward and Elgiva*. The last subject is one of those that Milton had selected for tragedy, but the plan of Hayley was, like all the others that he composed, except *The Syrian Queen* and his *Marcella*, original, and his own. When he had sketched his three plans, describing the tenor of every act and every scene, he requested his social critics, his Aristotle and Longinus, to take their choice of the three plans; engaging, when they had chosen, to write the tragedy which they most wished to see, as powerfully as he could. They voted unanimously for *The Viceroy*, and were the more concerned in finding it not permitted to try its fortune on the stage. Hayley, who had received from nature the happy propensity of building new castles in the air, as rapidly as he beheld one structure of that kind in ruins, soon exercised his fancy in compositions of various sorts, and was very cheerfully engaged in highly interesting offices of friendship. Thornton, in his next letter, December 11th, congratulated him on his joyous return to the lovers in Sussex. "I drink their health every day," said this warm-hearted little philosopher, "and pour out a libation to Hymen, lest from ignorance, I should let the nuptials pass without celebrating them, and breathing a votive prayer for the happiness of two friends, to whom I most fervently wish every enjoyment in human life."

The consummation, so devoutly wished, was not far distant;

Digitized by Google

but before it could take place, Hayley engaged Sargent to hasten with him again to London, for the pleasure of serving their friend Long.

This brief visit to London was memorable to Hayley in a literary point of view, as it furnished him with the subject of perhaps the best drama that he ever composed, namely, his *Comedy of the Two Connoisseurs;* but it will be time enough to speak of this anecdote when the play is produced. The nuptials of his friends are first to be recorded. They were celebrated at Lavington on the 21st of December, and not without various poetical demonstrations of joy, such as have a pleasant effect at the season of their origin, though without any claims to a perpetuity of praise.

We must not close the year 1778 without observing that it furnished Hayley with another new subject for a future drama, a subject first imparted to him in the following passage of a letter from Thornton:

"Welwyn, December 28, 1778.

"I would to heaven I were a magician, with the power of "removing from one place to another by the mere effort of the "will, to pass a day with the company at Lavington. Arnold "speaks in raptures of your scenes. Where are your songs, "your odes, your sonnets? in short, volumes of poetry? Send "some, or you are the most uncharitable of beings. But what "can I send you in return? I have met with what I should have "transmitted to you with eagerness two months ago, but now "find no spirit to transcribe it. I mean a plan for a tragedy "sent by Richardson to Doctor Young, who adopted it and wrote

Digitized by Google

" one act, which however went with his other manuscripts into " the flames."

On the story here alluded to, Hayley, who, undepressed by multiplied disappointments concerning the theatre, never lost his early passion for dramatic poetry, was induced at a subsequent period to form his tragedy of *Marcella*. The story was given to Thornton by his relation Mr. Young, (the calumniated son of the sublime poet,) from whose house at Welwyn Thornton wrote the letter just cited, and to whom in a future year he had the pleasure of introducing his friend of Sussex.

Digitized by Google

BOOK THE SIXTH.

CONTAINING A PERIOD OF FOUR YEARS, 1779, 1780, 1781, 1782.

CHAPTER I.

OCCURRENCES AND COMPOSITIONS IN 1779, AND THE DEATH OF THORNTON IN THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE NEXT YEAR.

While the trial of Admiral Keppel engaged the attention of our country, it so deeply interested the feelings of Hayley that he composed a poetical epistle to that gallant officer on his honourable acquittal; but as the Admiral's brother, Lord Albemarle, had married a relation of the poet, he was apprehensive if he published it with his name, he might be thought to have written rather to gratify a family to whom he was allied, than from the nobler motive of genuine patriotic spirit; he, therefore, kept his secret, and sent his poem to the Admiral, with the following anonymous billet:

"Sir,

"Permit me to entreat your acceptance of the following "tribute to your public virtues, as the author has no other wish "but that his performance may be thought not unworthy of the

Digitized by Google

"character to whom he has taken the liberty of addressing it. "You will pardon him for closing his billet without a name, and "allow him to remain one of the many unknown admirers of "your personal courage and your public conduct."

This nameless poem was published about the middle of January 1779, and Thornton, who had been intrusted with the secret, thus mentions it in a letter of February 19th:

"I left town the day that your gallant address to Keppel was "announced to the world. I long to know its reception, and "wish its fame may be co-extensive with the hero's reputation. "I brought it from town and read it to my amiable friend, "and not indifferent poet, Doctor Cotton, who was very much "pleased with the writing, which a lady in company thought was "that of a naval officer; but the experienced Doctor pronounced "it to be from the pen of a poet of the highest order and ability. "This encomium from a cool and excellent judge, I received "as no bad omen of the success likely to attend the work."

This was not the only anonymous poem that Hayley published in 1779: he sent in that year to the press of Cambridge, his elegy on the *Ancient Greek Model*, addressed to the Bishop of London. In a letter to Thornton of the 18th of April, he thus speaks of its origin:

"You know my great regard for the literary character of "Lowth. I was so struck by the account that Arnold gave me "of his having sunk in reputation, and by Price's reply to his

Digitized by Google

" sermon, that I could not resist the idea of purifying our in-
" tended patron for an extensive poem, by a few monitory verses,
" before we hail him in our projected work as the *Pontifex*
" *Libertatis.*"

This alludes to an intention of Hayley to inscribe a series of epistles on epic poetry to this accomplished prelate, whose *Prælectiones* he greatly admired.

The poignant admonition of the Elegy did not, probably, produce the desired effect; but that it was really composed with an amicable spirit, appears from the following private billet, with which the poem was sent to the illustrious personage, whom it presumed to admonish:

" To the Right Rev. Robert, Lord Bishop of London.

" Cambridge, 1779.

" My Lord,

" I present the following poem to your Lordship with a
" singular mixture of humility and spirit.

" My feelings are like those of a son addressing a venerable
" father, with whom he cannot possibly agree in some important
" opinions, though he still admires the splendour of his genius, and
" still loves and venerates his private virtues. I have only to wish
" your Lordship may think that I have really done what I have
" assuredly endeavoured to do; that I have expressed my own sen-
" timents though with a bold and honest freedom, yet with that
' decent and liberal respect which is due not only to persons of
" your elevated station, but to every individual in there public of
" letters whose talents have raised him to eminence well deserved.

Digitized by Google

"This, my Lord, you have happily attained; and that you may "long enjoy it, is the ardent wish of one who thinks he is dis- "charging his duty to our country, in this censure of your political "conduct though he is happy to profess himself, with the "sincerest truth, an admirer of your critical writings and your "domestic character."

A striking eulogy on the poem just mentioned, appears in the following extract of a letter from the celebrated Mr. Melmoth' to Thornton, the friend of Hayley:

"Clifton, 1779.

"Dear Sir,

"The packet you favoured me with a few days ago, conferred "upon me a double honour; as nothing could be more flattering "to my ambition than to be admitted into the number of those "persons whom you distinguish by your friendship; and to be "assured, at the same time, that the author of the fine elegy "addressed to Dr. Louth is desirous of receiving my approba- "tion. His manly and spirited poem has undoubtedly met with "the applause it merits from every reader of taste and judg- "ment; but if it can be any satisfaction to him to know that "my weak voice has joined in the general acclaim, I beg you to "assure your ingenious friend, that I attended his muse through- "out her flight with the warmest plaudits and admiration. The "singular turn and cast of the whole composition, as well as the "peculiar excellencies of the numbers, the diction, the sentiments, "and the imagery, mark him for a genius of no common class; his "well-directed satire soothes at the same time that it chastises, and

Digitized by Google

" puts me in mind of a certain hero of whom I have somewhere " read, whose spear while it wounded at one end, was endued " with the power of healing at the other. I had received this " elegant performance from Bull's library at Bath, some days " before I was honoured with it from your hand, and I was so " charmed with the perusal, that observing it was printed at " Cambridge, I immediately wrote to a literary friend of mine " near that place to recommend it to his reading, if he had not " seen it; and if he had, to inquire who the author was."

The praise that Hayley had received for his epistles to Romney, seems to have rendered him very active in similar compositions; as it appears from his letter to Thornton in April, that he had not only written the epistle to Keppel, and the elegy to Lowth, but also begun at that time, his epistles on history to Gibbon. His application, however, had been rather too vehement for his health; and for the relief of obstinate head-aches, he indulged himself in an excursion to London, Hertfordshire, and Kent, in the months of May and June, but his letters at that period to his Eliza at Eartham, abundantly prove that he did not completely abstain from poetical composition.

He sent her two recent songs, which he had just had the gratification of hearing highly graced by the music of Webbe; and also a poem addressed to Lady Warwick, with a view of gratifying his friend Romney, by obtaining permission to have a mezzotint taken from his exquisite portrait of that beautiful lady, a request that was for just reasons very civilly declined. While Hayley was improving his health by a little relaxation from

Digitized by Google

intense study, he had the pleasure of enjoying with his friend Thornton, not only the tranquil villa which that friend inhabited, but the magnificent scenery of Luton Park, and visits to Thornton's relation, the interesting son of Dr. Young, the poet, and to the amiable poetical physician of St. Albans, Dr. Cotton. Hayley and Cotton seemed to have been highly pleased with each other, as a letter of Thornton's dated Laurence End, 30th of May, 1779, begins thus:

"My very dear Friend,

"You have been often, and almost every moment, in "my thoughts, since I parted with you at the door of the amiable "physician at St. Albans, whose family you have charmed in "the highest degree. They are all most importunate with "me to introduce you as their guest, whenever I have the hap-"piness of your company at Laurence End for a longer period. "You would be flattered were I to inform you of all the enco-"miums they bestowed on you, which sounded highly pleasing "to my ear, as they so perfectly harmonize with my own feel-"ings, and gave me an opportunity of talking upon a subject in "which I feel peculiar delight. Any, the smallest tribute I can "pay to you, the relation of your character, and merits on fit "occasions, or any return for the immense debt of gratitude I "owe you, is the happiest occurrence I can meet with."

"My little coterie, whom you charmed as much at least as the "circle at St. Albans, most kindly greet you with every affec-"tionate wish. I hope soon to see you. I trust we shall agree

Digitized by Google

"upon a scheme of vibrating backwards and forwards between
"Laurence End and Eartham. Infinite thanks for your trouble!
"I cannot yet boast of health, but go on

"Sperando bene e sostenendo il male."

Hayley had been much alarmed for the benefit of this inestimable friend; but in the course of the summer his health revived by an excursion to Buxton; and he wrote cheerful letters from Derby, delighting Hayley with descriptions of the comfort he enjoyed, in the kind attention he received from their common friend Dr. Beridge, and in contemplating the Doctor's restoration to health by the influence of connubial felicity; sympathizing with Hayley completely, in admiring the domestic virtues of their friend's sweet-tempered and most exemplary wife.

While Hayley cherished the hope that the tender philosopher was reviving also in the north, he made a rapid progress towards the completion of his *Essay on History*; but the approach of winter had a severe and alarming effect on the imperfectly recovered health of his friend, who had returned from Derby to Hertfordshire, but was too ill to reach Eartham. On the 28th November 1779, Hayley wrote to him as follows:—

My very dear Friend.

"The account of your sufferings on the commence-
"ment of winter, and the idea of your solitude at Laurence End,
"affect me very much. As I have but the work of a few days
"more to finish my notes to the third Gibbonian epistle, and as
"my own precarious health is much better in general during the

Digitized by Google

" winter, I am projecting a speedy visit to your tranquil villa, as " the malignant demon of ill health has robbed me of the happi- " ness I expected in receiving you at mine. I propose, like Par- " son Adams, to take with me my great treasure, that is my " *Historical Sermons;* to proceed to London, and if your cham- " bers in Lincolns-Inn are empty, to put myself under the care of " your good laundress, and visit you *à reprises* in your rural châ- " teau. By these means I shall be able to unite pleasure and " business; to enjoy much of your society, and prepare my quarto " volume for the press. I rejoice that you like my *coup d'essai* " on Dante. I have despatched the three first cantos; Eliza has " just copied the second for you; I send it in a parcel to Longinus, " who has, I dare say, sent you the first. Apropos of your bro- " ther critic! my travels must in some measure depend upon his; " because he has promised to fly down to Sussex on the monu- " mental business, in which I am engaged for our friends of " Watergate. I write to him to-day, to beg if possible, that he " will execute this kind intention by the end of this week, as I " will then attend him on his return to London; pray give me a " line by return of the post, as I wish to regulate my motions " entirely as may be most agreeable to you," &c. &c.

The beloved sufferer sent the following immediate reply.

" St. Albans, *December* 1, 1779.

" My very dear Friend,

" Your very affectionate letter, which has given me " inexpressible comfort and satisfaction, has been just brought

Digitized by Google

"to me; I yesterday summoned resolution enough to come as "far as St. Albans, and put myself under the care of the most "amiable physician and his excellent daughters. The journey, "for so it proved, almost overcame me, I had a most afflicting "night, but was tolerable this morning. This afternoon Samuel "brought from the post your intended scheme of coming to "town, the idea of seeing you has operated with the force of "ten thousand cordials. I have but a moment to write in, I do "not miss a post, because I would not delay you one instant. I "think of going to town myself; it will be more convenient to "you, as they will not suffer me to be in chambers. I will put "you under the care of my very good laundress in Lincoln's-Inn, "and be at your old house in Queen-street, where I shall have "every domestic comfort, (by the kindness of Mrs. Rudd.) If "you will let me know when you come to town, I will leave the "good Doctor instantly, Clyfford has promised to come as far "as Barnet in his carriage to meet me.

"I trust I have weathered the storm, but I have had infinite "struggles with my infirmity. I was convinced that if I had "taken to my bed, I should never have moved from it alive. "Write immediately. My tenderest respects to Eliza. Dr. Cotton "and his worthy family salute you most kindly.

"Yours most faithfully,

"J. B. THORNTON."

"To John Thornton, Esq., at Dr. Cotton's, St. Albans.

"Saturday, December 4, 1779.

"MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,

"Your own heart will tell you what infinite delight

Digitized by Google

" we received from your letter last night; and how we rejoice
" to find that instead of languishing in the solitude of Laurence
" End, you are recovering under the roof of your excellent friend
" at St. Albans. I am enchanted at the affectionate eagerness
" you express to meet me in London, not only as a mark of your
" regard but as a symptom of your reviving strength. I had writ-
" ten to tell our dear Longinus, that as it would be more conve-
" nient for me to delay my expedition a little, I should hope to
" see him first at Eartham; but every thing gives way to my ar-
" dent desire of being an immediate eye-witness of your recovery;
" and I now fix Thursday next for my journey, as that is the first
" day in which I think you may conveniently reach London;
" for the post not going to-day, this cannot be with you at
" St. Albans till Tuesday.

" O may your host (that honour'd sire,
" Whom Phœbus' double gifts inspire!
" Who gained from that propitious god
" A soothing lyre, and healing rod,)
" To my impatient eye restore
" The friend, whose sufferings we deplore,
" With such new strength, as may impart
" The highest honour to his art!
" Presenting to my heart's decision,
" A sight beyond his brightest vision!
" Though I survey with fond esteem
" The charms of his poetic dream.

" I wish you could persuade your justly-beloved physician
" to have his head painted by Romney, and oblige the world
" with a print of it, as I long to see him in my volume of poetical

Digitized by Google

" portraits. Pray remember me to him most kindly, and say that " I salute him,

" With all the reverence and regard,
" With which the youthful British bard
" Was ever used in days of old,
" The senior Druid to behold,
" Presiding o'er that sacred throng,
" With healing arts, and moral song;

" and I charge you not to forget my warmest devotions to your " female companions.

" But tell fair Phœbe, that I kiss her hand,
" With as much ardour, and as pure a zeal,
" As any ancient knight, in Arthur's band,
" Or modern 'squire was ever known to feel.

" Adieu. Eliza desires her kindest love to you, and adds her " best wishes to those

" Of your most affectionate,
" W. HAYLEY."

Hayley set forth on his journey with the most sanguine hopes of seeing his friend recovered; and also of surprising and pleasing him with a new poem, peculiarly suited to his taste, namely, the *Ode to Howard*, the visitor of prisons, which the author had just finished. On reaching Chancery-lane, he met the following friendly letter from St. Albans, and was little aware it would prove the last he would ever receive from one of his most early, most esteemed, and most affectionate correspondents:

" MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,

" I trust this will meet you at Long's hospitable table, " or cheerful fire-side. I shall be impatient when I hear you are

Digitized by Google

" come, to embrace you, after my despondency and almost despair
" of seeing you again. I have been, while here, very bad, but with
" a good deal of difficulty and assistance, on every calm and fine
" day, I have been mounted on my horse; but either the cold or
" fatigue has always brought me back in a carriage. You will
" give me a line as soon as you receive this. The family here
" all long to see you, but dispose of me as you please, and I will
" obey, if the elements will suffer me to do so. I wrote to my
" excellent woman at chambers, to have every thing ready for
" you. Mrs. Rudd and Mrs. Clyfford are to settle among them-
" selves which of them shall have the trouble (or whatever other
" name they may give it) of receiving *un povero ammalato*. God
" bless you, and send us a happy rencontre, whether at St. Albans,
" as we pray here, or Barnet, or London, or elsewhere.

" Yours most sincerely,

" J. B. THORNTON."

" *December*, 6, 1779.

The following extract of a letter from Hayley to his Eliza at Eartham, relates the first meeting of these cordial friends.

" CHANCERY-LANE, Saturday Evening.

" I have the pleasure to tell you, that I found our dear philo-
" sopher better than I expected. I reached St. Albans a little
" before ten this morning, and have escorted him very happily
" to town. I left him under the care of Mrs. Rudd, in Queen-
" street, a little before four. He is very weak, in regard to
" exercise, but riding to town did not in the least fatigue him;
" and in a long private conference with Dr. Cotton, we agreed

Digitized by Google

"there was no symptom of immediate danger. He expressed "the highest delight in my coming to fetch him, and indeed "we passed a very agreeable morning, as we did not leave "St. Albans till near one. Dr. Cotton is acquainted with Howard, "and I rehearsed my ode by the Doctor's celebrated fire-side. "Both the physician and the philosopher were infinitely pleased "with it, and it has at least attained *some reward*, for it has "induced Dr. Cotton to promise he will have his head painted "by Romney, at our universal request. On this condition I read "the ode. Apropos of Romney! I have passed some hours "with him, and he has promised to execute some design for the "said ode, which he also admires exceedingly. So your Pin-"daric humble servant is of course *in the clouds*. As to the "Gibbonian packet, it is still sealed up."

The primary object of Hayley's attention in his present visit to London was the health of his sick friend; and he had soon reason to contemplate it with the deepest concern.

The invalid was most tenderly nursed in the house of Mrs. Rudd, wife to a solicitor, to whom Mr. Clyfford had relinquished his residence in Queen-street.

This excellent woman, being a daughter of Thornton's schoolmaster, had known him from his infancy, and held him as dear as her own child; indeed, his situation was such as to require the most tender care. Hayley, in a subsequent letter to his Eliza, says:

"Our poor philosopher is deplorably weak, and a provoking "incident has happened to-day, which has, I believe, rendered

Digitized by Google

"him much worse this evening. I am just come from paying "him my second visit to-day. Our friend Saunders, (Dr. Huck's "Saunders,) dropped some unguarded expressions, which I "believe his patient understood in a sense much stronger than "what the Doctor intended, and he is almost persuaded that he "is in an intermediate state between life and death. But there is "so much *hyp.* mixed with his real disorder, whatever it may be, "that Long even now affirms, if it were possible to make him "cease thinking of his own health, he would soon be stronger. "Saunders has desired to meet Warren to-morrow, and as I find "that very sensible physicians can be so *unguarded* as to frighten "a weak patient, I intend to call both upon Saunders and "Warren very early in the morning, and warn them of the very "singular state of our friend's unfortunate depression. How "weak is the noblest of human minds when reduced by lingering "illness! How very humiliating is such a sight to nature, and "how afflicting to friendship."

A subsequent letter proceeds thus:

"I fortunately executed the scheme I mentioned to you in my "last, and sallying forth very early this morning, got a sight "both of Saunders and Warren before breakfast; and prepared "them for their consultation at noon, in which they contrived, "as I desired, to raise our poor little friend's spirits almost as "much as Saunders had depressed him yesterday. The little "man begins to recover from his usual after-dinner pains, and is "at this moment walking up and down our old dining-room, with "such vigour and so firm a step as to shake the room."

Digitized by Google

Again in the next letter on this very interesting patient:

"I breakfasted this morning with Saunders, who confesses "they cannot pretend to any knowledge of his fate. It is indeed "all in the dark; yet both his physicians declare, even in pri-"vate, that they see no reason why he should not live many "years."

Perhaps in all dark internal maladies, like that in question, where the pains were supposed to arise from some inscrutable mischief in the *viscera*, the feelings of the sufferer are more to be trusted than the prognostics of his medical attendants. This amiable intelligent man was convinced by his own sensations, that he could not revive. Hayley continued to describe his situation, and in his next letter said:

"He apprehends the London air does not agree with him, "and has some thoughts of going to Mr. Young's with Mrs. "Rudd, and his sister. I made him the offer of attending him, "which he totally refused in the most affectionate manner; and "indeed (though I rejoice infinitely that I have seen so much of "him, because, as you justly observe, it will effectually prepare "me for the worst), I think he seems now to wish entirely to "withdraw himself from the sight of all his old intimate friends, "and as his situation is so particularly deplorable, perhaps this "idea is good for all."

Hayley was hardly able to tear himself away from a spectacle at once so attractive and so depressing! He lingered in town for the sake of seeing how the beloved sufferer supported a removal to the house of his sister in Kensington, which he wished to try

Digitized by Google

for a change of air. The last account of him that appears in the letters sent by his friend to Eartham is contained in the following words:

"I have seen Thornton again at Kensington this morning, and "persuaded him, as his brother-in-law is supposed to be dying "in his sister's house, to return to Mrs. Rudd's, whom I took "with me in my hackney coach, and with whose warm and "affectionate heart I am delighted. I believe he will return in "Clyfford's coach to-morrow, which gives me as much pleasure "as any thing of the kind can do in his present situation. I "apprehend there is no prospect of his immediate release; and "as I am convinced my staying near him can afford him no "satisfaction, I shall take the advantage of our friend Long's "leisure, and we both hope to be with you at Eartham on "Saturday."

Hayley returned to Sussex on the last day but one of the year 1779. The release of the beloved sufferer was much nearer than his friends had imagined: for on the 7th of the following January a letter arrived at Eartham, from that excellent woman Mrs. Rudd, giving the following account of Thornton, who expired at half-past six on the morning of the 5th.

"GREAT QUEEN-STREET, *January* 6, 1780.

"What, my dear Mr. Hayley, can I say? or how shall I "express the sentiments and actions of our dear friend for the "two last days and nights? Though I wish you to know all, it "is more than I can relate, and as I am well convinced your love

Digitized by Google

"for him is equal with my own, I think it would cost you too "dear in your own feelings to read. I will therefore endeavour "to give you all the comfort in my power, by assuring you that "our Thornton was restored to us again for several days. He "was all *that* amiable, composed, good man, we have always "known him. I took your letter to him, he was not then able "to hold it or see it; he said, 'Poor Hayley! I shall never "see him again in this life, our next will be a happy one!' He "took me by the hand, and said, 'I hope we shall all meet.' "Mr. Rudd and I sat up with him by his desire. He asked me "if I could perform my promise, and support him in his last "moments. I said, Yes! and he desired Mr. Rudd to raise him, "and let him lean on me, which he did as long as he had any "knowledge, or I could bear it. Death is certainly the King of "Terrors; and it has been a great struggle for me to bear it "properly. He behaved as you could wish, like the man and "good Christian."

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER II.

OCCURRENCES AND COMPOSITIONS IN 1780.

The early loss of Thornton was justly considered by Hayley as one of the severest calamities that he ever had to sustain.

The deceased was a man of principles so pure and so firm, of an understanding naturally so clear, and so enriched by a variety of knowledge; his manners were so gentle and so delicate, and his affection for his poetical friend so ardent, after an intimacy of many years, that Hayley had reason to think his loss irreparable. His sensations upon it were expressed in the following letter:

To William Melmoth, Esq., Bath.

"Eartham, *January* 28, 1780.

"Dear Sir,

"Though I have never had the pleasure of conversing with "you, my vanity has for some time taken the liberty to reckon "you in the list of my friends, and I now venture to exert one "of the dearest privileges of friendship, in thus addressing "you by letter on a subject peculiarly belonging to that sacred "connexion: I mean the loss we have mutually sustained in "the death of a most amiable man, who possessed through a "long intimacy my most cordial esteem and affection, and was "just beginning to pride himself on the acquisition of yours.

Digitized by Google

"The name of Thornton which you have most probably seen "in the public papers, will, I know awaken your regret, and "perhaps you may feel a desire of being further acquainted "with the particulars of his untimely fate. Allow me, therefore, "under the flattering idea of satisfying your wishes, to indulge "myself in speaking to you on the subject which possesses at "present a dominion over my mind. I had indeed been vain "enough to begin a long letter to you, on a very different topic, "about two months ago, after transcribing some passages which "I had borrowed from your writings to embellish a composition "that I was then preparing for the revisal of the dear friend "whom I have lost; but as you will readily imagine, on the late "affecting occurrences,

"'Totâ de mente fugavi
"'Hæc studia.'

"At the very time when I was writing to you, I received from "our friend an answer to a letter, in which I had offered to "visit him in Hertfordshire, on hearing that he was languishing "at home in a very solitary situation. He embraced my offer "with his usual warmth of heart, declaring that the idea of "seeing me was 'more to him than ten thousand cordials.' I "found him removed from his lonely mansion to the comfortable "house of his excellent neighbour, physician, and friend, Dr. "Cotton, of St. Albans, who supported my hopes of his reco-"very, and approved the plan of my escorting him to London, "very honestly and wisely declaring, that amusement for his mind "was the only safe prescription for his internal and inscrutable

Digitized by Google

"disease. I had great hopes that the assiduity of friendship "might afford him consolation and relief, but pain and languor "had closed up for ever all the avenues of joy. He languished "for above a fortnight in town, and though his physician per- "ceived no symptoms of approaching death, he was reduced to "a most deplorable condition; worn out with continued pain and "want of sleep, and utterly incapable of receiving any transient "amusement. Feeling all the humiliating restlessness that "belongs to disordered health, he then removed to the house "of his elder sister at Kensington. In a few days after his "removal, I was obliged to bid him adieu, being under the "necessity of returning home; fortunately perhaps for my own "health, which began to be much injured by the daily impression "of the most afflicting spectacle I ever beheld. I left him with "a most heavy heart, and under the horrid apprehension that he "would linger many months in the most pitiable state to which "human nature can be reduced; but it pleased Heaven to "shorten the period of his sufferings. In a week after my return "I received the mournful yet wished-for intelligence of his "release; an event which I should hardly have known how to "support, had I not undergone a severe preparation for it. I "had the consolation of hearing that his death was worthy of "his blameless and admirable life; for he retained all the "faculties of his manly and affectionate mind, in the trying hour "of dissolution. Under the pressure of this recent affliction, I "have found a very soothing satisfaction in reviewing your "excellent translation of Lælius, not only from the consolatory

Digitized by Google

" nature and intrinsic merit of that work, but from the accidental
" circumstance of its having been first read to us by our departed
" friend, who happened to be with us in this retirement when it
" first appeared. United as our minds were, there was no point
" in which we more perfectly agreed, than in our fondness for
" your writings, and our esteem for your character. I am not
" afraid of your suspecting this to be the language of flattery;
" for you are well acquainted with the human affections, and
" know that the voice of sorrow, though frequently impertinent,
" is not addicted to adulation. I avow to you, therefore, without
" scruple, that I take the liberty of sending you the enclosed
" poem, just written in honour of our departed friend, because
" I do not know any heart and mind better qualified to estimate
" and pronounce sentence on such a composition. I fear you
" will find it hasty and incorrect; but if it contains any to-
" lerable resemblance of the character it pretends to delineate,
" you will not be offended with its intrusion; for I know the just
" esteem which you had for the subject, and I have been informed
" of many obliging proofs of your partiality to its author.
" Allow me therefore to request the favour of your full and frank
" opinion, for I have some unsettled thoughts of printing between
" two and three hundred copies, with a view of presenting part
" of them to our respectable friends, and leaving the rest to take
" the chance of defraying the expenses of the press. But I
" have more than one reason for hesitating on this matter. In
" the first place, I have real apprehensions that the poem may
" be utterly unworthy of the subject; for an author is hardly

Digitized by Google

" ever a safe judge of his own productions, and certainly not so " when his mind is engrossed by a particular affection. Secondly, " I have some fears that the public may consider such a display " of private sorrow, as ostentatious and impertinent; though " in my own estimation, the man whom I wish to commemorate, " is a real public loss; and surely he was a character, of which, " to speak in the words of Johnson, 'it is fit the value should be " made known, and the dignity established.' How far the little " talent I possess may be equal to so delicate a task, I am afraid " to think, and shall therefore wait your unquestionable decision.

" I could not expose to you so recent and incorrect a com- " position without considerable fear, did I not flatter myself that " if I sink in your opinion as a poet, I may yet obtain some little " advantage in the character of a friend; and I am very am- " bitious of cultivating your acquaintance under every title that " may seem likely to procure me your esteem. I wish I had " the power of tempting you to a summer excursion into Sussex, " or an opportunity of paying my respects to you at Bath; but " as I cannot flatter myself with any immediate prospect of " either, may I solicit the consolation and pleasure of seeing you " in your letters; may I venture to hope, that the liberty I am " now taking will procure me future opportunities of assuring " you, that I am, dear Sir,

" With sincere and affectionate regard,

" Your most obedient Servant,

" W. HAYLEY.

" Mrs. Hayley, who is very intimate with you on paper, desires leave to salute " you with compliments and kind wishes."

Digitized by Google

The excellent critic and amiable writer to whom this letter was addressed, returned an answer so very kind and pleasing, that it proved a prelude to a continued correspondence highly valued by Hayley. He corrected and improved the poem on his departed friend, from the suggestions of Melmoth, who strongly pressed its publication. It was published in the spring, and highly applauded, particularly by all who knew the excellent person whom it fondly and faithfully described.

When he had paid this public tribute to the memory of his departed friend, Hayley proceeded to publish the two poems addressed to Howard and to Gibbon, which he had written in the year 1779; but which the illness and death of Thornton prevented his retouching and printing, till the spring of 1780. The author had passed some days with his friends Mr. Sadlier and Dr. Warton, in the house of the latter, at Winchester, in March. They approved the two poetical performances that he was preparing for the press, and in May he passed some weeks in London, for the purpose of superintending their publication. He had taken a lodging for himself and his Eliza, in Castle-street, Cavendish-square, for the sake of being very near his friend Ronney. As soon as the two poems were ready for circulation, he sent the ode with the following billet:

To John Howard, Esq., Great Ormond-street.

" Dear Sir,

" Your benevolence leads me to hope, that you will forgive " the liberty I take in addressing to you the little poem, which " you will receive with this letter.

Digitized by Google

"Considering your inquiry into the state of prisons, as the "sublimest example of charity that was ever exhibited by a "private individual, I could not help feeling a desire to make "known my sense of that obligation which you have conferred "on human nature in general. I am far from thinking that my "verse is adequate to the merit which it endeavours to describe: "happy, if it may procure me the honour of your esteem, "by expressing, however imperfectly, that veneration for your "virtues, with which

"I am, dear Sir,

"Your most obedient Servant,

"W. HAYLEY."

The just praise which the poet had a delight in bestowing on this sublime philanthropist, obtained the most pleasing returns of regard from the amiable Howard, who repeatedly visited his eulogist, and shewed an affection for him by a singular offer, that will be noticed in the course of this memorial.

The *Epistles on History*, addressed to Gibbon, were equally fortunate in procuring for their author, the friendship and correspondence of that illustrious historian. The following letter announced the poem.

To Edward Gibbon, Esq.

"DEAR SIR,

"The lively pleasure which I received in reading your "spirited *vindication*, inspired me with the first idea of the

Digitized by Google

" poem, which I now take the liberty of addressing to you. I " intended only a single and short epistle, but my production " insensibly increased to such a size, that I am almost afraid, it " may appear to you as heavy a present as you ever received " from the dullest of your theological correspondents.

" Perhaps the pride which I take in placing my own name on " the same page with yours, may lead one or two of these gen- " tlemen to honour me with a few such compliments as they " have paid to you.

" I cannot say that these are the honours which I am most " desirous of receiving.

" ' Sed tua me virtus tamen, et sperata voluptas
" ' Suavis amicitiæ quemvis perferre laborem
" ' Suadet.'

" I am more apprehensive that a superior set of critics will tell " me, (and with more reason on their side than I wish them to " possess) that in addressing a long poem on history to you, I " resemble the famous pedant of antiquity, who read a tedious " lecture to Hannibal on the art of war: but I know you will " be more obliging than the Carthaginian General, and not even " whisper to your friends that you have been pestered with " nonsense.

" Eager as I am to cultivate your regard, you will perceive that " I am not afraid to censure you, in the very moment that I am " soliciting a distinction so honourable as that of your Friend, a ' title which I should by no means despair of gaining, were I

Digitized by Google

"certain that my own composition did justice to the idea which
"I entertain of yours, and to that warmth of esteem with which

"I am, dear Sir,

"Your most obedient Servant,

"W. HAYLEY."

This billet produced a most agreeable reply, which led to much social and epistolary intercourse with the polite and friendly historian, who endeared himself by many graceful acts of kindness and courtesy to the poet and his Eliza. After having enjoyed the society of London, by residing some weeks in their lodgings, near Cavendish-square, it happened that the Hayleys agreed to pass the day and the night preceding their return to Sussex, under the roof of their friend Captain Conway, who had then a house in Hart-street, Bloomsbury, and by this incident, Hayley became a spectator of the nightly scene of riot and devastation, that proved so disgraceful to the metropolis in the beginning of June, 1780. He was awakened about four in the morning, by the sound of fire-arms; he leaped from his bed, and looking into the street, saw a dead man carried under the window in a butcher's tray. He perceived a blaze in Bloomsbury-square, and recollecting that a good old female servant of his friend Arnold was alone in her master's house, the house adjoining the Duke of Bedford's wall, he resolved to hasten through the crowd to protect and cheer this desolate domestic. For this purpose, he had to pass through groups of most fiend-like wretches, who were then exulting over the spoil which they

Digitized by Google

took from the house of Lord Mansfield, and had nearly consumed to ashes. The first object that Hayley saw as he reached the door of his friend's house, was a dead glazier, left leaning against the iron rails of that house; he rapped loudly at the door, and was richly rewarded for his excursion, by a most expressive flash of joy mingled with terror, that illuminated the features of the faithful old servant, who was both amazed and delighted to see so unexpectedly the face of a friend in such an hour. This good woman deserved indeed the title of a faithful servant, for in the evening before the devastation began, she was with her opposite neighbours, the servants of Lord Mansfield, who kindly pressed her to remain there for security; but she nobly answered, "it was her business to protect the house of her master, as long as she could." She returned, therefore, to her post, and really protected herself by her fidelity. Hayley remained with her till the scene grew more tranquil; he then returned to breakfast with his friends in Hart-street, and after talking over the strange events of the night, escorted his Eliza to the tranquillity of Eartham.

The success of his recent publications, and the pleasing society of the historian had so much encouraged the poet, that he began on his return to his retirement, an extensive performance of which he had for some time entertained an idea, and which proved on its completion the most popular of all his poems. His observation of the various effects of spleen on the female character, induced him to believe, that he might render an important service to social life, if his poetry could induce his

Digitized by Google

young and fair readers to cultivate the gentle qualities of the heart, and maintain a constant flow of good humour. With this view he composed his *Triumphs of Temper*, and the success of it appears to have been fully equal to his most sanguine expectations. He has been heard to declare, that the sweetest reward he ever received as an author, was a cordial declaration from a very good and sensible mother of a large family, that she was truly indebted to the work in question, for an absolute and delightful reformation in the conduct and character of her eldest daughter, who, by an ambition to imitate Serena, was metamorphosed from a creature of a most perverse and intractable spirit, into the most docile and dutiful of children. This poem, which was written with great rapidity, derived advantage from several incidents propitious to the fancy of its author; particularly a long and pleasant visit in the autumn from his favourite Romney, and the progress of rising affection between a couple of his friends, whom the tender artist painted at Eartham into a connubial attachment. From the letters of Hayley (to his Eliza, at this period on a visit to a lady at Cheam), it appears, that in September he had finished three cantos of his poem, and read them to his friends at Lavington. Having escorted Romney to Petworth, on his return to London, he hastened to devote himself in solitude to the advancement, if not the completion, of his poem; and to await an event that interested him still more, the birth of his son. But as his father has written a very ample account of every thing relating to him, in a work entitled the *Life of Thomas Alphonso Hayley*, it will be proper to mention him

Digitized by Google

only incidentally in this memorial. He was born on the 5th October, 1780. The father having finished the fourth and fifth cantos of his poem, posted shortly after to London. A very benevolent friend, Mr. Edmund Antrobus, had lent him an excellent house, with the command of his servants in Spring Gardens; a delightful habitation, very splendidly furnished with books and pictures. The scene was so striking, that, as the poet one day said to an Italian musician, who gave lessons in singing to Mrs. Hayley, "this cheerful house is lent to me by a friend;" the lively foreigner exclaimed "un amico! *un semidio!* vi ne sono pochissimi sulla terra!" The loan of such a mansion for a month was indeed a spontaneous favour very singularly obliging, and it was conferred as cordially and as gracefully as a poet's heart could desire. After having entertained very pleasing select society in this agreeable residence, and made some little progress in the concluding cantos of his poem, Hayley returned to finish this applauded composition, in his favourite scene for study, his villa of Eartham.

Before the expiration of the year 1780, he had exulted on completing the interrupted performance, which he was eager to deliver to the public; but the next chapter will shew that the poet had a singular little contest to sustain with his kind confidential critics, before he imparted to the world his most fortunate production, *The Triumphs of Temper*.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER III.

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS TO AND FROM MRS. HAYLEY, DURING HER RESIDENCE AT BATH, IN THE EARLY PART OF 1781.

The health of Mrs. Hayley had been ever irregular. The fluctuation of her spirits was rapid to an alarming degree. She returned to Eartham with her husband in November, but her medical friends had advised her residing some time at Bath. Hayley, although his passion for retirement and literary enterprise conspired with his slender finances to make him a recluse, yet most willingly took on himself the expense of providing in the most comfortable manner, for the support and amusement of a most pitiable sufferer, whose nervous infirmities admitted only of such palliation, as may be gained by tender and liberal care

"To manage well
The restless mind."

The letters of Hayley, to this very singular and highly meritorious mortal, afford a striking proof with what incessant tenderness and solicitude he endeavoured to counteract the infelicity of her constitution. He placed her at Bath, under the protection of his excellent friend Mr. Melmoth, with whom she had greatly wished to be acquainted. The following extracts

Digitized by Google

from letters addressed to her there, and from her replies, may form perhaps the best possible history both of the poet and of his hapless Eliza at this period.

To Mrs. H.

"January 2, 1781.

"I shall wait with the most eager and affectionate im-
"patience, till I hear of your comfortable settlement in that
"scene, which I flatter myself will have all those happy effects
"on your delicate health, that you so warmly expect from it.
"I now send to our friend the three first cantos of Serena, to be
"immediately forwarded to the press, and shall employ myself
"as much as my eyes will allow, in despatching the remainder;
"but the extreme eagerness with which I shall work to get
"this business off my hands, shall not prevent my sending
"a quick succession of hasty letters; as I can truly say, that
"your welfare is infinitely nearer to my heart, than poetical
"reputation or literary profit, God bless you."

From Mrs. H.

"Bath, Tuesday Evening.

"I hope, my dearest H., before this reaches you, you will have
"received my scrawl from the Bear. I cannot say with Lady
"Bunbutter, 'that it is my favourite house,' for indeed it was
"so full, and so ill attended that I rather lost than gained
"strength; but I was made ample amends for all the inconve-
"niences I suffered for want of rest the next morning, upon

Digitized by Google

"discovering on my arrival at my lodgings, that it is the very "apartment Mr. Antrobus is used to inhabit. The people "of the house are most creditable, and very select in their "society. I would not however engage to dine with the com-"pany till I had Mr. Melmoth's sanction, for as I observed to "him there is some little difference between even Mr. Antrobus "and a lady; but he rather gave it for my dining below, if it "were not disagreeable to myself, as he had heard Mr. Antrobus "speak of the society with great pleasure; and he said he was "very happy to fix me in a house, which had long been fre-"quented by many of his particular friends. * * * Mrs. "Pradington, our hostess, is an agreeable single woman, and her "brother, a respectable silk mercer, has improved his mind by "conversing with Mr. Antrobus, who is, you know, benevolent "and communicative. We have also a worthy Shropshire baro-"net, who arrived since Mr. Antrobus's departure, and has not "yet acquired much literature, but he is beginning to set about "it; for hearing that I had spent yesterday evening in the "society of Mr. Melmoth, he asked me at supper if he was not "an author, and if he had not written Marmontel's tales. But "I must proceed to my amiable patron, after mentioning the "expense of my apartments. * * * * Now for the "most agreeable part of the history; about half-past twelve "Mr. Melmoth arrived. Notwithstanding all favourable pre-"possessions, a certain awe, (increased partly by the want of "sleep) made my voice tremble a little, when I said I was happy "in the honour, &c. &c. But he had not been seated ten minutes

Digitized by Google

" when it all vanished entirely; and I felt myself perfectly at
" ease, and ready to converse with him upon all subjects. I did
" not forget to make the earliest inquiries after Mrs. Melmoth,
" who, he told me, would be happy to see me at her own house,
" or to wait on me that evening: but he had a request to make
" to me in the name of Mrs. Holroyd, Lord Sheffield's sister,
" that I would waive the ceremony of a first visit, and join
" a select society at her house, where I should see my friend
" Mr. Gibbon, who rejoiced in the idea of seeing me. You may
" be certain I did not resist so engaging an offer; and at six
" o'clock Mrs. Melmoth arrived to pay her respects to me,
" and to conduct me to the agreeable coterie, where I was
" introduced to Mrs. Gibbon, &c. &c. The historian was very
" gracious and agreeable, as usual. * * * I have had
" a most comfortable night, and find myself quite a new being.
" I shall now I hope, be much pleased and amused with the
" characters I meet; but I really was so completely worn
" out, that it was with difficulty I could attend to any thing
" on Monday evening, except the conversation of Gibbon, which
" is always interesting. He inquired very soon after Serena;
" and I mentioned your doubts and difficulties concerning Roche-
" foucault and Swift, and your wishes to preserve the latter;
" but from scruples of acting contrary to his advice, (and here
" a great many civil things passed on both sides,) I assured
" him you entirely sympathized with Pope, and that fame was
" only a secondary consideration with you; but I believed you
" wished to preserve Swift, for reasons which he allowed to be

Digitized by Google

" very forcible. I am to see him again on Friday, at Mr. Mel-
" moth's. He rallied me as usual about matrimony, but I rallied
" him a little in return, about Madame Dacier's sentiments,
" which I told him I fancied had alarmed him so much on the
" subject, though he agreed with me that it was no real reflec-
" tion on the sex, as she only says, 'if they will condescend
" to deceive,' and I added, we must suppose that Mrs. Gibbon
" would be very superior to such arts. He smiled, and said he
" could form no idea of that lady's character. * * * *
" Mr. Melmoth's health is extremely delicate. He tells me he
" has almost left off reading, and that he spends the greatest
" part of the morning in instructing a little relation, whom he
" has adopted, and wishes to keep as much as possible the child
" of nature; but that he finds a very difficult task in this scene
" of vanity. He seems to have preserved his own simplicity in
" a wonderful manner. I have just had a visit from Gibbon.
" I told him what I had written concerning your allegorical
" heaven. He laughed and wanted to know who were your
" saints, as well as your devils, whom he thought you had
" handled a little too roughly. But he says, an author is him-
" self the best critic, *if he will allow himself time.* He then
" talked of Melmoth, and asked if his countenance answered the
" idea I had formed of him. I confessed, not exactly. He was
" certain I expected a white wig instead of a black one, and a
" countenance more expressive of his heart, which we see in
" his writings, namely, all benevolence; whereas, (though I
" did not care to own it, till Gibbon made the observation,) there

Digitized by Google

" certainly is a sternness in his aspect, which I did not expect: " but this, as I before observed, the purity and mildness of his " conversation soon banishes; though I rather suspect (which " is more for his credit than my own) I shall always find him too " good to say in his presence every thing that comes uppermost. " I must now say adieu! Gibbon observed these three sheets on " my table, and I told him he would think them more alarming " than any of Madame Dacier's maxims. Let me hear from you " as soon as possible."

To Mrs. H.

" January, 14.

" The return of your attendant, my dear Eliza, gave me new " life on Friday evening; and the incomparable history which " he brought in his pocket, gave me more delight than I can " receive from the two eagerly expected volumes of Gibbon. " Your picture of Bath is most exquisite, (pray observe I use the " most emphatic epithet in the connoisseur's vocabulary;) your " friend Nurse requested to hear these despatches, and you " would have smiled at the gravity with which she exclaimed, " as I finished the last page, ' Pray don't you think my Mistress " ' writes incomparably well?' I leave you to guess my reply; " but I observe to you, that your comic and natural descriptions " have the applause of our critical old woman, (whom we justly " reckon superior to Moliere's) for the sake of tempting you to " favour us with as many sketches of the same kind, as you can " find leisure to produce. I rejoice you have caught a glimpse

Digitized by Google

"of your cherubinical cupid, (as Steevens sarcastically and "enviously called our great historian,) for as you truly say of "him, he is always entertaining; but I should quarrel with that "card-table which robbed me of his conversation.

"For sure the fair much joy has mis't,
"Whose cupid sets him down to whist,
"And changing smiles to serious dumps,
"Smothers his wit, to count his trumps.

"I thank you much for your solicitude to obtain his farther "criticism on Serena. I think he will be flattered by my having "granted a pardon to his friend Rochefoucault; but Swift we have "resolved to keep still in our limbo, as an object of useful terror "to those wicked misanthropical wits who satirize the world, "and particularly your sex so unjustly. I think you will be in-"finitely diverted by the various critics around you, (not except-"ing your good Shropshire baronet,) as soon as Serena appears, "which I hope will be in little more than a month, as they have "begun printing the first three cantos; and the last I despatched "to Long on Thursday, after making a few alterations in the "passages, that struck us before your departure. I hope to hear "this evening, what Long and Arnold say to my conclusion. I "am delighted with your account of Melmoth, and am per-"suaded that he will soon love you as his own daughter; an "idea which I consider as a compliment both to him and to you, "and certainly a proof of my regard for you both. You cannot "do better than by giving him, as you have done, a parent's au-"thority in regard to your conduct. As to such points as powder

Digitized by Google

" or no powder you may safely decide them by your own feelings; " as you might indeed any other, if the world could understand " as well as I do, how much more of the angel than of the woman, " is blended in your constitution. But as this is a point that " cannot strike the gross discernment of the public, you will for- " give my saying that you cannot be too guarded in your be- " haviour. I rejoice in your having so musical a companion in " your house, as I trust it will contribute to your pleasure and " improvement. I wish to make music to your life, what poetry " is to mine, a source of inexhaustible amusement. I shall devote " myself more keenly than ever to an employment by which I " may increase my finances. Happy, if my old friends the Muses " enable me to contribute to the prosperity and the pleasure of " those for whose happiness I am most warmly interested."

From Mrs. H.

" As my amiable patron, who rises every day in my esteem, " engaged to write to you yesterday, I thought you would " excuse my postponing my letter a day longer. I sent for " Dr. Staker (with whom I am much pleased) on Friday, and I " began the *Waters* in the most moderate manner yesterday. I " am much obliged by your kind offer of William to attend me, " but I do not think he would add in the least to my comfort, and " greatly to my expense. Gibbon's friendly attention to me ex- " ceeds all description. In speaking of my going to Bath Easton, " which he told me I must visit, he said he would attend me; but

Digitized by Google

" a lady would be a properer chaperone; and as to introduction, " *my name* was sufficient. There my dearest Hotspur! what say " you to that? I am interrupted by Dr. Staker, whose politeness " and delicacy remind me of our own physician. He desires me " to tell you, he shall pay the greatest attention to the trust you " are so kind as to repose in him."

To Mrs. H.

" January 21.

" I shall expect with great eagerness a description of your trip " to Bath Easton, and I hope you will shew your influence over " the great historian, by making him turn poet on the occasion. " As to your expenses I never wish to set any bounds to them, " but those of your own discretion?"

From Mrs. H.

" I am requested by Mr. Melmoth to entreat you to let him " see the first letter which Gibbon wrote to you immediately on " the receipt of your essay. You may guess his reasons for wish- " ing it, and I am certain you will be happy to comply with his " request, both for his gratification and for Gibbon's credit.

" On mature examination, Melmoth still appears to be nearer " the character of our lost philosopher, than any of our surviving " friends. He says (I think it is with the wise son of Sirach) he " would not even know an unamiable character: and after con- " versations which I have listened to with exquisite pleasure,

Digitized by Google

" between him and Gibbon, he has only expressed a moderate " degree of satisfaction; but as they tell me, I am certainly " something of an enthusiast.

" Mrs. Holroyd tells me, Gibbon has desired her to get some " proper person of her acquaintance to carry me to Bath Easton, " for she says he declines going himself; but my curiosity makes " me wish to visit a scene I hear so much of, and from which I " send you some verses, which Mr. Melmoth admires exceedingly. " But to return to Gibbon! I think it necessary to mention par- " ticularly some circumstances, as you will certainly wish to " thank him for his attention to me, when you write to him with " your new poem; and I think he will expect you to do so, for " though he has condescended to interest himself concerning my " health and establishment, really with the delicate solicitude of " a brother, yet I am convinced he wishes me to *look up to him;* " but I cannot help telling you of some degree of fun which " your four verses upon him have occasioned. I mentioned to " him the having received a letter from you, and your having " congratulated me on my good fortune in meeting him. I also " ventured to say, you had expressed your concern, on account " of the ladies, that so much entertainment should be lost at the " whist table, and that you had given him a couplet: upon " which he exclaimed with great eagerness, 'O shew me the " couplet.' 'No! that I cannot; for it was not intended for " your inspection, Mr. H. conceiving that he had already given " you couplets enough.' 'No indeed! those would make me " wish for more.' 'That will be very flattering to Mr. H.'s

Digitized by Google

" vanity, or rather to his ambition.' 'Well! but my curiosity!
" you will not be so cruel as to awaken, and then refuse to
" gratify it?' 'I cannot suspect Mr. Gibbon of curiosity; and
" I hardly know why I mentioned it, unless it were to observe
" how much the Muse was mistaken in one line in which she
" says 'Smothers his wit to count his trumps,' which I can
" vouch to be false, as I saw you trump with the ace by mistake.
" Then he began trying every kind of persuasion, and questioning
" me why I would not shew it him. I said I had only a lady's
" reason with a negative added, or to polish the language for Mr.
" Gibbon, because I could not. 'Why! was it too flattering?'
" 'That was impossible.' 'Was it too severe?' 'By no means!
" nor was it (I added) too tender.' 'Was it proper for the old
" woman's inspection?' (for I had given him Nurse's character)
" 'Yes! I thought it possible she might have seen it:' 'That was
" indeed very hard, not to allow him the same indulgence.' 'Cer-
" tainly, not to rank you as an old woman.' In short, I had the
" *curiosity* to try if this great man had any grains of that femi-
" nine endowment, and I am satisfied that he has; though on
" my supposing him to be above it, he seemed as if he wished I
" should think so; yet, *en badinage*, on supplying Mrs. Holroyd's
" seat at the whist table, he charged her to get the secret for
" him, which she promised to do. After much entreaty from
" her, (though she owned she had been a very false friend, and
" told Mr. G. almost every thing I had said of him) I at last
" said, if I did shew her the verses, it should not be till after Mr.
" G.'s departure; upon which she exclaimed, 'then Mr. Gibbon, I

Digitized by Google

" must begin a correspondence with you.' Well, but to conclude " my history; he seriously did request Mrs. Holroyd the next " morning to get the verses for him, as she told me after he left " us; but that she told him, honour forbids; and on my reading " them to her, and giving her the history of Cupid, or rather of " his godfather Steevens, though she was much diverted, she said " she did not wish him to know it, as she thought it would hurt " him. I make no apologies for all this nonsense, for after the " compliments you pay my last, (which it seemed to me little to " deserve) I think it may divert you and your old woman, to " whom I beg you will remember me in the most affectionate " manner."

To Mrs. H.

" January 28.

" I am infinitely your debtor for the very kind and entertaining " accounts you give me of yourself and the scene around you. " The detail of your sporting with the curiosity of Gibbon " diverted me exceedingly. But how could you venture to shew " my nonsensical impromptu to such a new acquaintance as " Mrs. Holroyd? She judged, however, very right in keeping " your secret. Indeed, I should have been much hurt, if Gibbon " had any how caught hold of the title that Steevens had given " him, in a fit of malicious laughter at the rotundity of his " features. But enough of these idle matters: let me now " give you in return for your memoirs, some account of myself. " The history of a poet, you know, is, as some biographers ob- " serve, little more than the history of his works. You will not

Digitized by Google

"be surprised, therefore, at my having no better subject to talk "upon than my own compositions, which have engrossed much "more of my thoughts in the past week than I wished them to "do; for behold here arrived on Tuesday night, no less than six "sheets, full of slashing remarks, from the dear critical congress. "This was a perfect blister to the brain, for they wanted me to "change the conduct of the incidents in the last canto entirely, "and omit the sonnet in the 4th; but after the most candid and "impartial deliberation on their reasons for this measure, and on "the new plan, which they were so kind as to suggest for the "improvement of the poem, I resolved to adhere to my original "design, only changing particular couplets, and making such "slighter alterations, as I thought sufficient to take off the force "of their objections. This, however, was a business that cost "me no little time and trouble; so much, that in returning to "my chamber on Thursday night, and feeling considerable in-"flammation in my eyes, and more pain in my head, I began to "calculate how long I had worked in the day to produce such "effects. In summing up the account, I found to my surprise, "that I had employed no less than nine hours in the most intense "thinking on the most unpleasant of all subjects, my own bad "verses. I rose, however, much recruited by a good night's "sleep, and sent my courier off with my six sheets of corrections, "and reply to the critics, by eleven on Friday morning. I still, "however, continued to meditate on the points in question, not "without much mortification and distrust of myself, in differing "so widely from two very dear friends, to whose opinions I am

Digitized by Google

" in general much more partial than to my own; but in the
" present case, I felt so strongly that the plan which they recom-
" mended, would totally murder the effect of my poem, that I
" could not help being obstinate in the defence of my own ideas,
" though at the hazard of being thought a vain puppy. While
" I was engaged in these pleasant lucubrations, who should
" arrive but your cousin Leeves, with a very kind intention to
" dine with me and sleep under my roof. We spent all our
" evening in criticism, as I was happy to have so poetical and so
" sincere a judge to pronounce on the matter in debate. I
" stated the points to him as fairly as possible, desiring him to
" shew me no mercy if I was wrong. After hearing the last
" canto deliberately, and the proposed improvement, he said,
" that to the best of his judgment, I was right in every parti-
" cular; and he believed, no poet that ever existed, could possibly
" give to the plan they proposed a tolerable appearance in
" *poetry*. He approved greatly the alterations I had made, and
" particularly two verses which occurred to me after I had
" despatched my packet; and we tried our skill together in en-
" deavours to improve the four concluding verses on the tablet,
" which the critics did not like, and of which I had given them
" variations. Leeves's decision in my favour gave great relief to
" my mind, and before he left me yesterday, which he did after
" breakfast for a shooting expedition in this neighbourhood, I
" despatched another letter to Longinus, with the account of our
" conference, and a few more short corrections. As it may
" amuse you to see the two inscriptions for the tablet which I

Digitized by Google

" have now given the critics to choose from, I shall transcribe " both for you: perhaps you may not recollect that the tablet is " introduced by these preceding lines on the figures in the temple:

Their meeting arms a mystic tablet raise,
Deck'd with these lines, the moral of my lays.

1st INSCRIPTION CORRECTED.

Virtue's an ingot of Peruvian gold,
Sense, the bright ore Potosi's mines unfold:
But Temper's image must their use create,
And give these precious metals sterling weight.

2d INSCRIPTION.

Homage to virtue, as our queen we pay;
And wisdom, uttering her commands, obey:
Yet fondly own a more attractive power,
And hail thee, Temper, friend of every hour.

" Pray tell me which pleases you most. I believe the latter " harmonizes best with the scene of the Temple, &c. Leeves " knows not which to prefer. I send you the copy of Gibbon's " letter, as you so warmly request it; but I must entreat you to " shew it only to Melmoth; for I esteem letters most sacred " things; and it seems to me an unjustifiable breach of trust to " give any copy of a letter without the consent of the writer. " Besides, as it is so flattering to me, I know you will join with " me in thinking it indelicate to shew it, except to such a par- " ticular friend as the person for whom you desire it, and who " has indeed a right to make us any request. I have written

Digitized by Google

" him a hasty letter to travel with this, but I have taken no " notice of what I send you."

From Mrs. H.

" I will confess the charm of novelty is almost at an end, and " I feel myself at times *ennuyée*. But I will first speak of your " works. Since I received your letter on Thursday, I have " longed to hear that the Poem is entirely off your mind and " gone to the press. I have practised very hard; Mr. Melmoth " told me I must absolutely give up the waters or Rauzzini; and " as his stay was so short, you may be certain I did not hesitate. " To make amends for loss of time, I returned home from " Mr. Melmoth's an hour before the rest of the company, and " practised till twelve o'clock, to get tolerably perfect in a charm- " ing Italian song of Rauzzini's composing. He really sets English " songs in a wonderful manner, considering how little he is " acquainted with our language. He took his leave, and four " guineas for eight lessons of me, yesterday morning, intending to " depart for London to-day. He recommends Miss Guest very " strongly, and says she is qualified to give me some instructions in " singing; and she plays divinely. I shall send one of Rauzzini's " songs to Fanny Heron, and desire her to sing it to you."

To Mrs. H.

" February 11.

" In thanking you for your very kind letter, I must make a " few comments on one interesting part of it. You say: ' I will

Digitized by Google

"confess the charm of novelty is almost at an end; and I feel "myself at times *ennuyée*.' Now, my gentle Kate, as I am "growing such a philosopher, as to aim at extracting some good "out of every thing, I please myself with the idea, that your "present ennui may conduct to your future comfort. I will "explain myself more fully. But let me first quote to you, (as "a proof that your feelings are not singular in this point,) a very "beautiful passage of Marmontel. 'Une prevention trop avan-"tageuse pour les biens qu'on désire, fait qu'on éprouve des qu'on "les possède, *ce mal aise*, et ce dégout, qui ne nous laissent jouir "de rien. C'est la maladie des ames vives et delicates.' I was "wonderfully struck with this passage, as I happened the other "day to begin, while I was dressing, the tale that contains it. "It is entitled *L'heureux Divorce*, the first tale in his third "volume. I think it may afford you singular pleasure in one of "your solitary evenings. But to return to the subject which led "me into this digression. I should have been much more con-"cerned, a few weeks ago, at the failure of those pleasures you "expected, than I can profess myself to be at present; and this, "as you will perceive, arises from a very substantial and very "affectionate reason—as I then designed to promote (as I "thought) both your health and your entertainment, by an "annual visit to Bath at the season when your tender frame "suffers so much from the cold; believing that the produce of "my literary labours might support such an annual extraordinary "expense, and wishing only for money to employ it for your "advantage. But I have been taught a very disagreeable lesson

Digitized by Google

"by the collection of our accounts; and I am perfectly con-
"vinced, that with all I can gain by literature, we shall find retire-
"ment necessary to us both, for a few years at least. It is my
"fixed resolve to employ the next four or five years of my life (if
"Heaven is pleased to bless me with health), in the most econo-
"mical attachment to this lovely solitude, and in such studies as
"I think will conduce most to my interest and reputation. I
"should think it fortunate, if you should also be seized with
"the same passion for retreat,

"'As hard a science to the fair as great;'

"as our friend Pope sings, though with one of the worst
"*rhymes* to be found in his works. Observe, however, that
"I do not mean to represent myself *as great*, nor you as
"one of those fair who have no joy but in dissipation.
"Indeed, as I am sure it must be for our pecuniary inter-
"est, I am most willing to believe, that it may be also for
"our mutual comfort and happiness, to remain as much as
"possible at home together. I would, therefore, wish you to
"satiate yourself completely at present with the pleasures of
"Bath, as the recollection of them will, in that case, render you
"still fonder than ever of this tranquil retirement, which I con-
"template every day with increasing partiality. At the end of
"four or five years I project, (for there is no living without a
"castle in the air,) a most delightful expedition to Rome, and to
"live there for a few years. I have now said enough of Econo-
"mics; but in all I have said I trust there is not a single word

Digitized by Google

" which can give you a moment's pain, as in truth I would never " wish you to feel one; and on this point I think you have no " occasion, for if the Muses are propitious, (as I trust they " will be for a few years to come,) we shall maintain ourselves " and our beautiful little villa in a very comfortable style. I " hope Miss Guest will make you great amends for the loss of " Rauzzini, and I expect to be enchanted with your musical " acquisitions."

From Mrs. H.

" February, 18, Thursday Eve.

" I have spent a very agreeable morning at Bath Easton, and " must (not very much against my inclination) spend such another " this day se'nnight, for I am not so *great* or so fashionable, *or* " *am literally so ridiculous*, as not to ridicule the entertainment. " The house and the situation are beautiful; though, as Lady " Miller observed to me herself, a confined prospect; but a con- " fined prospect, as I have reflected in my walks on the South " Parade, is best suited to this season. I arrived about an hour " before the ceremony began, during which time I had some " pleasant conversation with Mrs. Knowles and others. There " are two pretty sized rooms, I think not larger than our own, " one within the other. The vase, which is in the outer room, " was elegantly ornamented with laurels and pink riband, and " before the base are laid three myrtle wreaths, as the prizes. " At the appointed hour we were all summoned into the outer " room, which is the largest: Sir J. Miller takes a young lady

Digitized by Google

" and carries her to the vase; she takes out a copy of verses
" which is given to any gentleman who will read it aloud. After
" the compositions written for the occasion are all read by who-
" ever *will*, for I must not say whoever *can*, read them, the gen-
" tlemen retire, and after deliberating, return with what they
" think the best copy to Lady Miller, who pronounces. And
" then the gentleman who is honoured with the wreath, presents
" it to some fair lady. Then those who like it play at cards, and
" the morning concludes like all other public entertainments. I
" must only observe that Lady M. carries round a basket, with
" the enclosed inscriptions rolled up; and that she *repeatedly*
" hoped I would honour the vase. Now, my dearest H., I am
" too obedient even to prefer a petition; but if you should feel
" disposed to honour this slight amusement with a light compo-
" sition, I am persuaded you will oblige very highly, and I can-
" not, though I am thought not totally *dead* to the ridiculous, see
" any reason against it. Indeed at present it is a very elegant
" and a very agreeable amusement, as I said to Mr. Melmoth
" when I requested him to give me some verses for the vase;
" but he at first declined it, pleading himself too old, and said
" 'apply to Mr. Hayley.' Upon which I observed that no one
" could be too old to write upon *Content*. But after many entrea-
" ties, he at last said he could not write; and if he could, he should
" be ashamed to have his verses appear in such company. I then
" began the defence of it, observing, that if you mix with the
" world you must associate with trifling company; and appealed
" to *Dodsley's Collection*, *Foundling Hospital for Wit*, &c. &c.,

Digitized by Google

" where you see the most brilliant compositions, by the first of " writers, next to the most insignificant; and that Mr. Anstey, I " found, had frequently honoured the vase. 'Very possibly,' (in a " tone rather above the natural key), and 'Mr. Anstey may hold " my sentiments very cheap.' 'No!' I replied, 'I dare say Mr. A. " and every other person of feeling, has a great deference for your " opinions.' Then we got upon the institution, and the absurdity " of so trifling and expensive an amusement, and the folly and in- " utility of it. Now with respect to the expense, it may be exactly " ranked with a common visiting day either here or in London. " Sir John and Lady Miller make a point of never encouraging " any personal censures, and never will allot the prizes to any " such composition, however meritorious in point of language or " brilliancy. One of the mottoes on the urn in particular is from " Pope, 'Curs'd be the verse, &c.,' so that the amusement is truly " innocent; and its end charity; for whatever the publication " sells for goes to the poor. 'But it does not sell' cries Mr. Mel- " moth, 'for nobody will buy such stuff.' And why not? be- " cause from prejudice men like yourself will not contribute, or " a few good compositions would ensure the sale of it. I ven- " tured to remark, that an amusement of this sort was as much " in character in a scene like this, as a bull-baiting or a cricket- " match would be within a few miles of Portsmouth; as the one " is to encourage the martial spirit, and the other refinement and " delicacy of manners: this in an age when real gallantry is so " much out of fashion, and the men decline all polite attentions " to the fair upon principle. You see the most beautiful young

Digitized by Google

" women without partners at every assembly; and the young men, " who would be very indignant at being supposed never to have " learnt to dance, sauntering up and down the room, yawning and " declaring they are *ennuiés à la mort*, and yet refusing every " friend that solicits them to dance with any young lady of their " acquaintance. Now I really think if instead of being rude, they " could be persuaded to be civil upon *principle*, it would be doing " a general good; for if the dancing-room was more frequented, " the billiard-table, &c., would indisputably be less so; and of " how much advantage this would be to society, it requires very " moderate talents to discover."

From the same.

" If you have not already complied with my Bath Easton re- " quest, which I flatter myself you will before this arrives, this " letter will tempt you to do it. I do most sincerely wish to put " some pretty verses into the vase, as I really think it a compli- " ment due to Lady M., and it will please all the persons that " were concerned in my going thither, which many people of for- " tune are longing to do, and speak slightingly of it because they " cannot. I should not have a doubt of your compliance, if I " had not mentioned Melmoth's objections, which I will *now* ven- " ture to say arise entirely from prejudice. However, I am cer- " tain he could not possibly object to your compliance with " a request of your wife's, as he hardly ever refuses any of " Mrs. Melmoth's; and if the verses are not already gone, if you " send them by the post of Tuesday night, I shall get them on

Digitized by Google

"Thursday morning time enough. I really should feel very "uncomfortable to go empty-handed to Bath Easton."

To Mrs. H.

"EARTHAM, *March*, 1781.

"Your first kind letter, my gentle Kate, found me on Tuesday "evening in the midst of a singular hurricane, which gave us "some idea of the West India tempest. Houses were stripped, "and barns blown down. The cottage of Hetherington was so "torn to pieces, that I received the poor woman and her four "girls into my little château, which, thank Heaven! stood fast; "and considering all things, I have received little damage. My "riding-house was in jeopardy, but I had the infinite satisfaction "of preserving it by my own activity; for while I was surveying "the state of the stable-yard, the men told me it was shaken; "but affirmed that it was impossible to do any thing for its re-"lief, as the wind was then enormously violent. Your Hotspur, "however, chose to march himself to its assistance, and seeing "my determination, my little troop attended me with great fide-"lity and spirit. The state of it, indeed, seemed desperate when "we arrived, for the wind setting full west, in spite of the "beechen grove that I thought must protect it, drove the long "fabric, like a great vessel in the water, all on the eastern side, "to which it inclined more and more every minute. I despatched "William and the gardener for some poles to prop it, but the "gardener's lad in the mean time luckily recollected two scaf-"folding boards in Alfred's Castle. He brought one of them

Digitized by Google

" with great expedition, which we adjusted to the nodding struc-
" ture, and which absolutely proved the safety of the building;
" for before the poles could arrive, the wind drove it so forcibly
" against the board we had raised, that we were convinced had it
" not met with such support, it must inevitably have fallen to the
" ground. But to return to your kind letters. Wednesday even-
" ing brought me your second epistle. I rejoice you were so well
" pleased with the entertainment you received at Bath Easton.
" Your arguments with Melmoth in favour of the vase, &c, delight
" me; and I particularly admire your honesty in letting me know
" his sentiments, at the very time you are wishing me to write
" some idle badinage for a scene in which he would be ashamed to
" appear. Now, though I confess I felt a little of his reluctance
" at the first idea, yet as I have considered that the greatest heroes
" and sages have often done a foolish thing to please their wives,
" (and we love them the better for it,) I have resolved to imitate
" their example in this point at least. I have accordingly scrib-
" bled a nonsensical squib on the subject you desired, to shew you
" that I love to comply with every request of yours: But as it is
" scrawled in a most rapid manner, being literally produced in a
" morning and a half, and I have no kind critic at my elbow, to
" tell me whether it is such nonsense as we ought to blush at pro-
" ducing in any company; I therefore send it through the
" hands of the dear Longinus, with an injunction to burn or send
" it forward as he judges expedient, well knowing that he will be
" no less inclined to oblige you, than I am by the composition,
" if he thinks it is such as will not reflect any real disgrace on

Digitized by Google

" your bard. I have only to request, in case he despatches it to
" you, that you will take the trouble to copy it for the vase, in
" your own hand, and keep my copy yourself; and in this point
" I entreat you to oblige me. I wish it may not afford you more
" mortification than pleasure, by getting into the vase without
" obtaining the prize, which I conceive to be a very probable
" circumstance. My old woman reads to me the text of Gibbon,
" and when she arrives at the bottom of two pages I examine the
" notes. She does not do perfect justice to the harmony of his
" language; but we have advanced through two chapters, and I
" think she improves. I grieve to find from some parts I have
" dipped into, the same sarcastic air on religious subjects. What
" says Melmoth?"

From Mrs. H.

" Thursday night.

" A prize! a prize! my dearest Hotspur! and the very first!
" I was so complimented at your expense, that I did not get
" home to dinner till after five; for I called to shew my ele-
" gant wreath (which was pinned into my hair by the beautiful
" Miss Wraughton) to Melmoth, who, like every one else,
" admires the verses beyond description. They were read by
" Mr. Langrish, a son of Sir Hercules Langrish, who indeed did
" them justice, and entered fully into the spirit of them, which
" you may be sure pleased me not a little. But not to trouble
" and fatigue your eyes, or add to my present fatigue, (for even
" honours are fatiguing) I will only add, that since the receipt

Digitized by Google

"of your letter yesterday, I have been almost wild with joy. "Mrs. Gibbon is quite in raptures with the verses. I told her "she was quite the Madame de Lambert of the age. We are "all dying for Serena. I think your Bath Easton verses will "save my character, as it is observed that you *understood con-* "*tent.* Anne, and all Mrs. Pradington's family are wild with "the honour. What says nurse?"

To Mrs. H.

"How sincerely I rejoice in your joy, my dear Eliza, your "own heart will tell you. Indeed, if the triumphant verses had "any portion of elegance, or spirit, they owe it entirely to my "eager desire of making them the ministers of your pleasure; "and as they have proved so, I will not use them so ungratefully "as to disparage their merit. Your myrtle wreath hangs in "triumph, as you direct, on the favourite little horse of bronze "on the chimney-piece. He seems to prance with peculiar pride "in your victory. Nurse says I have the cleverest wife in the "world, to contrive things so well for her husband's honour; "and she is perfectly convinced no one on earth can write such "sweet letters as her mistress. Indeed, I cannot help despatching "to you my early thanks for your two delightful accounts of "your trip to Bath Easton, though it is so late that my horse "has been long waiting for me, and my eyes are much fatigued "with many letters I have been obliged to scribble, and with "poring over some Spanish volumes, lent me by no less a per-"son than his Excellency the Portuguese Minister; for I have

Digitized by Google

" entered into a negotiation with the ambassador of Portugal, " and wish that our treaty may prove to the honour of our " respective countries. The key to this sublime riddle is merely " this, that he has politely lent me some books, and offered to " send to Lisbon for some others that I happen to want. Your " favourite garden begins to solicit your return, by its flowery " appearance, and as I hope you will have received as much " benefit as you can wish from the waters of Bath, by the be- " ginning of next month, I propose to escort your majesty home " to your imperial villa, by the 11th of April, the day if you re- " member, when we first came to reconnoitre our little dominion; " and I hope you may be prepared to visit it again by that day " with a new stock of health, spirits, and happiness."

From Mrs. H.

" The arrival of the Lady Serena at Bath on Friday morning, " has entirely banished the head-ach, &c. I got through the " first five cantos between tea and supper; and after supper " attended your heroine through her last trial, and then drank " your health; I will not attempt to tell you with what sensa- " tions. * * When I called on Mrs. Gibbon, I found her " writing me a letter to tell me how enchanted she was with it, " and that she had read it three times over."

To Mrs. H.

" As my sympathy in the present case is more a proof of weak- " ness than affection, you will be sorry to hear, my dear Eliza,

Digitized by Google

" that I have sympathized with you not a little in bilious head-
" aches, though I have nothing to do (I thank Heaven) with
" routs, and as I hold them very prejudicial to your delicate
" health, let me beg of you to avoid them. I have no one to
" thank for my complaint but my old enemy, the sun, who, re-
" membering I suppose that he is the patron of poets, thinks it
" proper to give me a rap upon the head, whenever he meets me,
" for my many bad verses, and I therefore keep out of his reach
" as much as possible; but as we have had of late no friendly
" interposing clouds, I have not been able to escape from his
" malevolent power. I rejoice in the account of your increasing
" strength. You are absolutely growing quite Herculean, and I
" think you will soon be fit for a march over the Alps. If you
" say that patience is not one of my constitutional virtues, you
" must at least allow that it is one of my acquired ones, or how
" could I have endured your absence for three months? and I
" think your friend Gibbon would say, artificial virtues are the
" most meritorious. Apropos of him, how have you advanced in
" his history? Old Nurse and I have got half way through the
" last volume; she diverted me exceedingly by an exclamation
" on some passages in the capture of Rome by the Goths, where
" the grave historian talks a little too facetiously about the cap-
" tive virgins, &c. 'In my mind (said the venerable sibyl) this is
" a sad pack of stuff to put into so fine a book.' The spirit and
" *naïveté* of this remark struck me so forcibly, that I was almost
" ready to conclude with Moliere, that an old woman is the very
" best of critics."

Digitized by Google

To the same.

"My dear Eliza, as you think a longer residence in Bath of "real consequence to your health, you have my full permission "to remain there, till the last moment that you wish to "do so. In all points remember it is my ardent and in-"variable wish to promote your welfare and happiness, to which "I am ever ready to sacrifice both my fortune and my pleasure. "Regulate your stay at Bath, therefore, exactly as you think best. "Poor Melmoth! his account of himself, which is confirmed by "your description of his countenance, affected me not a little. "I know how to pity that wretched state of languor and dejec-"tion which he describes, as I am just emerging from a similar "condition, and a series of the most oppressing head-aches. But "let us proceed to livelier subjects. I have received some very "pleasing letters from some fair correspondents in praise of Serena, "and on the happy effects it will produce in the female world. "As I wrote the poem peculiarly for your sex, I receive more "pleasure in hearing it commended with spirit by a few sensible "and sprightly women, than I should do from a panegyric in "its favour by all the professed critics in Christendom. The "essays of your favourite Montaigne, have been called, you know, "the *Manuel des honnêtes gens*. My ambition is to see my poem "become the *Manuel du beau sexe*. I both admire and love "your friend Mrs. Holroyd, for preferring an affectionate heart "to a brilliant imagination. You will do the same thing at her "age; and indeed you would do it at present, if you were "not sometimes flattered into partiality, by that faculty of

Digitized by Google

" which nature has given you so liberal and uncommon a
" portion."

To the same.

" You will, I think, have some little curiosity to know how
" I have replied to the pleasing compliment on Serena, which
" you transmitted to me from the fair poetess of Bristol, though
" never poor bard was in a worse condition to make a spirited
" return to a sister of the lyre. As we hate, you know, to be
" tardy in our gratitude, and as Lord Hastings says,

"' To let the coldness of delay hang on it,' &c.,

" I could not help despatching a few hasty lines to this obliging
" poetess, and sent them by the post of Friday. I could not
" take the usual precautions of sending my verses to be criti-
" cised by Longinus, because I believe him to be on his road
" to Salisbury; which I was sorry for, as the young physician
" thought the conclusion of them rather too warm, and was, I
" fancy, surprised to see a composition with a spark of animation
" from a poor poet, whose animal spirits he had just been
" draining, by four leeches and two blisters: for I conceive
" he expected my verses to be perfect water-gruel, as my diet
" had consisted of little else. I cannot otherwise account for his
" opinion, as they appear to me without a shadow of any thing
" that can appear too strong for the eyes of the most delicate
" and modest of women. I would not offend my fair poetical
" encomiast; but I think she must be very prudish indeed,
" (which I am very far from supposing her to be,) if my verses

Digitized by Google

" offend her in that point of view. Pray give me your honest " sentiments upon them."

TO MISS HANNAH MORE.

Thy verse, sweet sister of the lyre!
A hapless poet found,
His brain oppress'd with feverish fire,
His eyes in darkness drown'd.

But with a magical control,
Thy spirit-soothing strain,
Dispels the languor of his soul,
Annihilating pain.

If to relieve the sickly hour,
Thy distant hand can frame
A tuneful charm of such high pow'r
To kindle pleasure's flame;

How may he scorn all human harms!
How blissful his condition!
Who shall encircle in his arms
So lovely a magician!

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER IV.

CONTAINING VARIOUS OCCURRENCES AND EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS, TO THE END OF 1781.

In May 1781, Hayley visited London, to meet his Eliza on her return from Bath, and escort her to Eartham. The Waters of Bath had rendered no essential service to her singular state of health, but the scene had amused her mind; and the advantage of receiving instruction from a very skilful musician had afforded great improvement to her musical talents, which her husband had entreated her to cultivate in every situation, as the most pleasing and the safest antidote to the restless agitation of her nerves. He thought himself agreeably rewarded for the expense of her residence at Bath, by the increased powers and sweetness of her voice; particularly in those Italian songs she had learned from Rauzzini. The poet hoped that his literary industry would produce sufficient supplies; and in the course of the summer and autumn he employed himself assiduously in his *Essay on Epic Poetry*. His attention to an extensive work of his own did not render him inattentive to the merit of other poetical writers. He had been highly pleased with Miss Seward's elegy on Captain Cook, and he sent her a few verses in praise of her publication, which engaged him in a long familiar correspondence and friendship with that celebrated lady. After his Eliza had left Sussex, for

Digitized by Google

a second residence in Bath, in November, he was induced to accept an obliging invitation from his sister of Parnassus, and to pass some time with her and her aged father, in their hospitable mansion the Episcopal Palace of Litchfield. The scene was perfectly new, and highly pleasing to the poet; some account of his occupation and amusement there may be found in a sequel of extracts from his correspondence with his lady at Bath.

In his road to Litchfield, Hayley did not fail to visit his friends at Derby, as will appear from the following letter:

"DERBY, *December* 16, 1781.

"MY DEAR ELIZA,

"I seize a moment (while the brother Doctors, Beridge "and Darwin are withdrawn to visit a patient,) to inform you "that I have had the pleasure of finding our amiable friends of "this house, as well as we wish them.

"Their persons are both improved by gaining a little increase "of flesh, and their hearts, which could not be improved, are "still as warm and friendly as ever. Though I did not get out "of London till after eight, I reached Leicester on Friday night; "and by this forced march surprised the Doctor in his fortress "by twelve yesterday noon. Here are two pleasant girls in the "house, the nieces of Colonel Gladwin, in all the bloom and "simplicity of rural youth. One of them very obligingly sang "the skirmishing song last night to the Doctor's flute, and they "are all delighted with Harrington's composition.

"I have just despatched a poetical note in Darwin's pocket,

Digitized by Google

" who is going to Litchfield to-day, to tell the fair Muse I shall
" be her guest to-morrow.

" We are going to visit Wright and his pictures, and I must
" therefore bid you hastily farewell.

" I touch not on the material article in your last letter, *money*;
" because I find Dodsley intended to send you a fresh supply
" of that important commodity in a most gracious manner. I
" long to hear what he said to you, and what you replied.

" You will excuse this hasty scrawl, as I shall write again in a
" day or two after I reach the Muse, of whom I hear a singular
" yet not unpleasing character. I admire her advocate whom
" you mention, and shall (I dare say) be of his opinion. Adieu.

" Ever your affectionate,

" W. H."

A series of Extracts from Letters sent to Bath from Litchfield, and from the Replies.

" EPISCOPAL PALACE OF LITCHFIELD,

" Tuesday, December 18, 1781.

" Behold me seated, my dear Eliza, in a very noble and com-
" fortable house of the church, where divinity and poetry form
" a very uncommon and agreeable alliance! I bade adieu to our
" good friends at Derby yesterday morn, and arrived here soon
" after twelve. The fair Muse perceived my chaise as she was
" sitting in a neighbour's window, and hastened home to receive
" me. That my reception was gracious in the highest degree I

Digitized by Google

"need not inform you, and as to the person of this female genius, I cannot give you a better idea of it, than by saying she "is a handsome likeness of those full-length pictures which "you have seen of your namesake, Queen Elizabeth, where the "painters gave her Majesty all the beauty they could consistent with the character of her face. The Muse laughs at "herself as fat and lame; yet the connoisseurs in woman would "still pronounce her handsome. For my own part, I say to myself, "like Louis XV., when a celebrated lady was first shewn to him, "'The Queen is infinitely more beautiful.' The Muse is famous, "you know, for elocution; as well as composition; and certainly "she reads with peculiar force and propriety: but the sweet "melody of your voice has ruined my ears for more ordinary "tones, and while she recited part of the Ode to Howard, I felt that "although the *execution* was *fine, the instrument was imperfect;* "she seemed to want what you say is wanting in the admired "actress of Bath. Do not think me grown fastidious, and ungrateful; for indeed I have every reason to be pleased with "my fair hostess, and her venerable father, who is a worthy, "polite, and pleasing old man. He brings to my remembrance "the joyous vivacity of the good old Dean. The Muse very "obligingly entertained me with a sight of a letter from Bath, "where Mr. Whalley speaks of you in very pleasing terms.

"I am now scribbling in a very elegant room, with a bedchamber adjoining, in a detached part of the house, which are "very politely consigned to my private use. The situation must "be more healthy than the miserable damps of Derby, and the

Digitized by Google

"prospect is peculiarly fine for a city residence. My hostess "returns you many thanks for the song of Myra, which has the "grace of novelty, as well as the charm of coming from your "hand. I have not yet seen Mr. Saville; but as I understand "he sings finely, and with great feeling, I will beg you to send "us *all my songs*, that your friends Harrington or Rauzzini may "happen to embellish with music.

"Adio Carissima!"

"BATH, *December* 22, 1781.

"MY DEAREST HOTSPUR.

"Your last letter from Litchfield pleased me more than all you sang or said before.

"I was so truly delighted with it, that I have hardly been "able to eat or sleep since I found it on my table yesterday "at two o'clock, on my return from a walk to pay my compli-"ments to Mrs. Gibbon; you will, therefore, guess me a little "unequal to the task of thanking you for that and the other "very *satisfactory* one from Derby. Your account of the "Beridges gives me and their friends here much cordial "pleasure. I sincerely hope you will find your residence at "Litchfield pleasant enough to tempt you to stay to finish the "notes to the Epistles I so much long to see come forth.

"As you have in a former letter encouraged me to take these "liberties, by thanking me for a *carte du pays*, you will allow me "to advise you not to be alarmed at some disagreeablenesses in

Digitized by Google

" a new situation. If you recollect, it is the advice of Lord " Halifax (the Author) to his daughter, respecting the *first* of " situations.

" Conversing with the dead certainly spoils us in some degree " for the best of the living, as with the first we enjoy all their " merits without their imperfections; and though I have no " genius to justify such fastidiousness, I will own, that, much as " I love society, I never leave Eartham without being for the " first week of my peregrinations exceedingly *ennuiée* with the " insipidity of people, even on my arrival at *Bath;* but once " being seasoned, things go on smoothly. I wish I could send " you a song; but I see no prospect of getting any except from " Mr. Leeves, with whom I have passed some hours, and he " promises to bring *Ye Powers* in less than a fortnight. He is " charmed with the song, and says if he does not succeed (in " setting it) he will renounce composition in future. I shewed " him your sonnet to Dr. Harrington to encourage him; and have " sent him a copy of the *Skirmishing Song*. That charming " man (Dr. Harrington) is harassed to death in his profession; " and poor Rauzzini has been so ill with a cough, that he was " obliged to give up teaching, which mortifies me beyond " measure, as your kind flattery makes me anxious to improve " my voice as much as possible. I shall be very impatient to " hear that the air of Litchfield agrees with you, and how your " literary pursuits go on. I called on poor Melmoth the other " night, and carried him a pheasant. He was much pleased, and

Digitized by Google

"desired to be kindly remembered to you. Give my best "respects to your obliging host, and believe me,

"Dearest Hotspur,

"Your affectionate,

"KATE."

"LITCHFIELD, *December* 23.

"A country town is a scene so very unfit for poetical studies, "that I am amazed the Muse can write here at all; for not-"withstanding the reports you heard at Bath, she has a multi-"tude of female visitors, and a host of divines. Her pleasant "and hospitable father brings the lively and facetious old Dean "perpetually to my remembrance. This excellent house I think "I described to you in my last; the scene is endeared to "poetical imagination, by having been the nursery of Garrick "and Johnson, who both passed their younger days under this "roof, when it was the residence of Mr. Walmsley, a man of "fortune, who generously assumed the care of their education. "This circumstance gave birth to the following little impromptu "to the Muse, which I transcribe for your amusement:

Hail, happy walls! within your ample space
  May no rude sounds the pleasing calm destroy!
May peace and friendship on this spot embrace!
  And Echo only sound the notes of joy.

Hail, happy mansion! not that pathos here
  First deigned in Garrick's infant eye to roll,
While Science, proud to train his young compeer,
  Gave Steel's bright powers to Johnson's iron soul:

Digitized by Google

But that fair Seward, whom the Nine inspire,
Gay as the lark, and gentle as the dove,
Makes the sweet scene, responsive to her lyre,
A little heaven of harmony and love!

"No words can tell you how eagerly we wish for the power "of transporting you hither on a cloud, to hear some of Mr. "Saville's delightful songs. He is equally astonishing in the "grand and the pathetic, the humorous and the tender. He is "much pleased with the music of Myra, and I will beg you to "send me copies of the songs that Rauzzini has promised you "the moment you get them; though I fear that will hardly be "while I remain at Litchfield, for I must endeavour to reach "home again soon. I have not heard of Alphonso since I left "home; and I grow uneasy about him, and wish for a sight of "him. Though the kindness and the manners of the Muse and "her father delight me, I yet often feel oppressed by the civility "of their visitors, and in the midst of honours and flattery I even "sigh for the silence and solitude of Eartham.

From Mrs. H.

"Bath, December 28.

"Your descriptions are so descriptive, that I almost feel myself "of your party; and yet I long to judge for myself of Mr. "Saville's powers: for in music it is difficult for any one to say "what will please another. My friend Mrs. Holroyd and I, "though we think alike upon most subjects, yet differ widely "on music, for she lies awake after an Oratorio, and I after an

Digitized by Google

"Opera. After a week's confinement, Rauzzini attended me "yesterday; and he promises me the songs before he leaves "Bath. His health is deplorable, and he is teased to death "concerning the concerts, which, though in my opinion in-"comparable, it is the fashion to neglect: and it is supposed he "will lose a hundred pounds by them this year. I think you "would be enchanted with his singing; and his manner of teach-"ing is particularly agreeable, as he tells me where I am likely to "succeed, and rather dissuades me from attempting *too much*, "bidding me remark the weak parts in some of the greatest "singers. But to bid adieu to music, and speak of poetry! "First, let me thank you for the verses, which please me ex-"tremely. Then I must tell you, *my elegant volume* (Trans-"lations from Madame de Lambert) arrived on Monday. I "presented it to Mr. Melmoth on Christmas-day: he expressed "a profusion of gratitude and thanks to us both, and commis-"sioned me to say every thing that is kind to you. He never "goes out at night, and is very solitary; but I think more likely "to live than he seemed last year. Mr. Glover is gone to sit "with him this evening, and I dare say will talk a great deal "about the *Ode to Howard*, for he read it to a little circle after "dinner, with great spirit and pleasure. He really is a surprising "man for his age. I hope long ere this you have received im-"mediate despatches from the dear Alphonso: I rejoice in the "little incident that has by chance procured us an account of "his health.

"I have promised Sir John Miller to spend a day at Bath

Digitized by Google

"Easton, and I am to meet Mrs. Siddons at Mr. Whalley's. "He is so civil; I have refused two invitations already this "week to meet extraordinary personages, and to-night I resist "a son of Bishop Law, &c. Pray wonder and admire the dis-"cretion of a Bath lady to spend three evenings successively "alone in her apartment, at this full season, when she is solicited "for various entertainments; but in truth my merit is not great, "as they do not tempt me: at present music is my object, and "I attend to that as much as possible. Pray have you heard of "my friend Dr. Cotton? and is he within reach of a visit? If so, "I am certain, between himself and his garden, you would be "amused for a day very pleasantly. He spoke of the Muse in "the handsomest terms, therefore I am anxious for her attending "you thither."

To Mrs. H.

"LITCHFIELD, December 30, 1781.

"Your last letter, my dear Eliza, was doubly welcome, from "the affection which it breathed and the expedition with which "it travelled. It reached me on Tuesday, and contributed to "the pleasures of the following day, when the fair Muse and I "took a trip to Derby, and paid a very agreeable visit to the "Beridges. By rising early we reached Derby about eleven, "and remained with our friends till after six. We arrived again "in the Episcopal Palace by ten, before the good old Divine had "risen from his supper. The kind and easy behaviour of Mrs. "Beridge towards the Muse delighted us all, and the whole

Digitized by Google

" party agreed the day would be remembered as one of the fes-
" tivals of the calendar of life. Yet no pleasures are perfect,
" and we all expressed our wishes that you could have joined our
" little party. Your kind letter, however, was to me the best
" consolation for your absence: as I should have been restless
" concerning the post, had I not possessed that quieting paper in
" my pocket; for I continue as eager and impatient as ever for
" your letters; and when they do not arrive quite as soon as I
" wish or expect, I am seized with a sort of *post fever*; which
" is a disorder that you can much better imagine than I can
" describe. I am much obliged to you for your very good and
" affectionate advice concerning *situation*. I am much pleased
" on many accounts, that I have paid this visit to my admirable
" Parnassian sister: but though I am truly delighted with her
" wonderful talents and most pleasing manners, I have resolved to
" make a hasty retreat to the dear solitude of Eartham. I feel the
" necessity of not losing any more time, for delays in the pub-
" lication of my new work will be highly inconvenient to our
" Royal Exchequer, and as to my own serious business, I find that
" I can do nothing but in the inspiring tranquillity of the dear
" and delightful Eartham. The prosaic visitants of a country
" town absolutely rob me of all literary powers, and not even the
" sublime Muse of Litchfield, can counterbalance their lethargic
" influence. I hope the song of *Ye Powers*, will arrive here in
" your next.

" * * * * * * * * * *

" The Muse salutes you with every affectionate wish. Adio!"

Digitized by Google

When Hayley had resolved on any line of conduct he was generally resolute and rapid in pursuing it; although many kind invitations conspired to detain him much longer in the north, he contrived to reach his favourite southern retirement very early in January, 1782. Before we proceed to the incidents or letters of this new year, it may not be improper to remark, that 1781 may be regarded as one of the most memorable years of his life. It not only witnessed the publication of his most prosperous poem, *The Triumphs of Temper*, but saw also the completion of his *Poetical Epistles on Epic Poetry*, and a multiplicity of occasional verses to his particular friends, arising from the incidents of the year.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER V.

OCCURRENCES, POEMS, AND LETTERS OF THE YEAR 1782.

A PASSION for home is the characteristic of a mind to which Heaven has granted the inestimable privilege of being able to furnish inexhaustible amusement and comfort to itself. Hayley had this passion in no common degree, and very early in life. It was now considerably increased by the promise of a most engaging mental character, in his little Alphonso, whose infantine endearments had infinite influence over the heart and the imagination of the poet. The delight of their meeting is described in an early letter of this year: but a few extracts from those that were written before the traveller was restored to his favourite retirement, have a claim to precede that description.

"BATH, January 5, 1782.

"You flatter me so much in speaking of the *post fever*, which "is a malady I so perfectly comprehend, that I am almost "tempted to despatch my letter in one of Gibbon's franks this "evening.

"I flew home from Doctor Harrington's yesterday, where I "had spent a very agreeable morning with Mr. Leeves, rehears-"ing *the song* which I enclose; and in such a situation you will

Digitized by Google

" allow me to have *hoped*, in opening your letter, that my next
" might find you at Litchfield, but your conduct as I know you
" always design it, is truly generous; and this idea will console
" you for the loss of Mr. Saville's enchanting voice in your favour-
" ite song. Miss Harrington played the harp accompaniment, and
" Mr. Leeves sang it very agreeably. I really think he has hit off
" the proper expression, for you know it is gentle and mild, and
" therefore requires that sort of skill which should belong to the
" performers of genteel comedy. I know you will comprehend
" my meaning, from having yourself made the same remark on
" my favourite little air in the *Demofoonte*

" ' Ah che ne mal verace. &c.,'

" on my wishing to have it set to music: and indeed I give
" you the credit of suggesting the idea to me in the present
" instance. I have no genius of my own, only the power of ad-
" miring it in others, which I begin to consider as a *sort of gift*.
" I can easily conceive your being worn to death with the con
" versation of prosaic visitors. I have been teased since I came
" to Bath with *musical connoisseurs*, who talk in a manner
" that used to provoke and confound me at first; and often
" made me recollect Gray's observations upon Criticisms on
" Poetry, to which I had before subscribed most heartily. I
" have also made another discovery which will divert you: I now
" find it necessary *to think* a great deal upon the subject claiming
" attention; which was a language I hardly understood, when
" Romney and you used to declare that the mixing much in

Digitized by Google

" company, interfered with your respective arts. * * * Upon
" a maxim of yours in the Epistles to Gibbon, I rather think
" it salutary at present to quarrel at the distance between me
" and the professed Italian singers. There is a *charm* in that
" style of music, that no other, in my opinion, can arrive at. It
" quite transports me into a new region, though I am completely
" upon the earth while Handel's or any of the fine English songs
" are singing; but I shall always sing yours in the best manner
" I am able. I shall long to know what Fanny Heron says to *Ye*
" *Powers*. Mr. Leeves (who set it) is a very agreeable, respectable
" Divine; and as he has many friends at Bath, and lives within
" an easy distance, pays it many visits. He is a great admirer
" of poetry, and of yours in particular. I gave him a copy of
" your sonnet to Dr. Harrington, which he admires extremely,
" and lamented your not being able to steal that sort of fire
" (musical invention) which you wished, but I really think you
" have enough of a superior sort to satisfy a reasonable gen-
" tleman. *The Three Sisters* would be rather too much even
" for your management. Your incomparable letter is this mo-
" ment arrived, so I shall despatch mine by this evening's post;
" and I hope it will salute you and the dear little hero soon after
" your arrival at Eartham. Pray tell me how he receives you,
" and if he seems to know you. Of the little *morceau* to Colonel
" Gordon I need only say, it drew tears from me, and as you
" know I am not *over pathetic*, this is some compliment. I re-
" joice highly on Howell's account, and think the stars seem to
" befriend him in every thing. I am going this evening to a

Digitized by Google

"little musical party at Miss Guest's, so you will excuse my "hasty thanks for your two charming letters."

The Captain Howell, whom Mrs. Hayley takes a pleasure in describing as befriended by the stars, was a singularly interesting orphan, whom her husband had the delight of raising from a very humble station to such an eminence in the early road to fortune and to fame, that his poetical patron cherished a sanguine hope of seeing him rise into the character of an English Xenophon; but his career was immaturely terminated by the dark catastrophe of perishing at sea, in an East India ship, supposed to have been leaky. His adventures might form a striking episode in this memorial; but they are so remarkable, and his correspondence with the Poet of Eartham was so extensive and so lively, that they would, perhaps, seem more appropriate in a separate work; here it may be sufficient to observe, that the young soldier had just been promoted by the kindness of Hayley's friend, Gibbon, into a regiment destined for India, of which Gordon was Colonel; and the *poetical morceau* addressed to that officer, was kindly written by Miss Seward, his acquaintance, to recommend the juvenile Howell to his favour. These circumstances appear in the letter, which Hayley despatched to his Eliza on the day before he took leave of Litchfield. In that letter he declines the purchase of a tempting horse, kindly proposed to him by Mrs. Hayley, to whom he said in reply:

"You may plead, as my reason for not accepting this offer,

Digitized by Google

" the difficulty of conveying the horse to Eartham; but the most " important reason with me is, that I do not choose to indulge " myself in such an expense; and, to tell you the truth, I was " very near giving up my expedition to this place for the same " reason. I am very glad, however, that my eager desire to " see the *wonderful Muse* got the better of my economy, as I " think her a truly pleasing and valuable friend, and one in " whose society I flatter myself you will hereafter have con- " siderable pleasure. Her *predilection* to you is extreme; and " though your tastes differ in some literary matters, I think you " will like each other. I now find it absolutely necessary for me " to shut myself up as soon as possible in my favourite retire- " ment, and work very hard, to procure the last requisite both " for you and myself."

The travelling poet seems to have lost no time in his long journey homeward, as his next letter begins thus:

" Monday morn, *January* 7, 1782.

" Health to the gentle Majesty of Eartham!

" I seize a pen in the first morning after my arrival at this " imperial villa, to give you an immediate account of my safe " return, and of all your loving subjects. By sleeping on Satur- " day night at Epsom, (where I had some very pleasing conver- " sation with the gentle Mariana and her affectionate parents,) I " reached Eartham between three and four; for I was very eager " to see both my garden and the fairy prince who trips around it " by day-light. They both appeared to advantage; for the day

Digitized by Google

" was uncommonly fine, and the little Alphonso no sooner heard
" me salute him in my usual language, than he expressed his
" delight on my return by the most engaging little endearments;
" and he is so very fond of me this morning, that I have been
" forced to use some *finesse* to escape from him for the purpose
" of scribbling, My return at the hour in which I arrived
" appears quite providential; and has been happily the means of
" restoring one of our domestics, whom I found extremely ill
" with a violent bilious complaint. Her disorder was so alarming,
" that Nurse very properly despatched the gardener yesterday
" for our physician. The doctor when he arrives to-day will
" compliment me on my medical skill, as I administered at four
" o'clock the same medicine which the returning messenger
" brought from him at eight the same evening. Indeed, I par-
" ticularly rejoice in having returned so apropos, for all our
" servants have the foolish but affectionate foible of supposing
" themselves much safer from death when I am with them, than
" they do if attacked by illness in my absence. This idle idea
" is itself sufficient to increase, if not to create, the very danger
" they apprehend. At present, thank Heaven, there is nothing
" to fear. The medicine has succeeded. The sufferer is
" restored, and the rest of our household perfectly well; the
" old woman, quite blooming, and doatingly fond of Alphonso,
" who keeps her in exercise, consequently, in better health. It
" is possible that I may be obliged to visit the metropolis again
" next week, in behalf of our dear Longinus, as there is some
" chance of an immediate vacancy in his hospital; and if that

Digitized by Google

"happens, I shall fly up to canvass for him with my usual eager-
"ness and solicitude. I wish, however, that this may not
"happen just at present, as I am very desirous of sitting quietly
"down in my favourite retreat to finish the work, whose publi-
"cation I should be very sorry to delay, for very cogent pecu-
"niary reasons; and I have still much to do, both in the forma-
"tion and notes, and in transcribing the latter parts of the poem.
"Though I passed but few hours in London, I did not omit
"calling on the great historian; but had not the happiness
"of seeing him, for, alas! he was confined to his bed by the
"gout. I find here two literary presents of a different nature;
"a Portuguese *Epic Poem*, from the Portuguese Ambassador,
"and a pious volume from your old friend, the good Jonas
"Hanway. As I must immediately thank the givers of this
"varied entertainment, you will allow me to bid you adieu;
"and accept the devotions of the little Alphonso."

"BATH, January 13, 1782.

"I congratulate the dear Majesty of Eartham on his safe arri-
"val in his dominions, and on the success of his first manœuvres.
"I sincerely hope your patient will have no return of her disorder,
"and that every thing will go on prosperously. I was pecu-
"liarly anxious to hear of the dear little Alphonso, as I own I
"was weak enough to feel some degree of superstition from
"your account of his endearing manner towards you, just be-
"fore your departure. Pray how many teeth has he? and does
"he eat heartily? Indeed I join in hoping you will not be called

Digitized by Google

"to town again till you have finished your notes. I am now "practising singing with great ardour, as Rauzzini departs in "about ten days.

"I imagine you have been visited by the Lord of Lavington, "and that you have rejoiced together on the good fortune of "Dr. Roberts as the new Provost of Eton. The Archbishop of "York has been here for some time. I am ready to smile at the "idea of your epigram every time I meet him; but here is Lord "Gower and several of his children, that make me fancy myself "in Romney's painting-room, and I look more at them than at "my Lord of York. I have received most satisfactory accounts "of the historian through Lady Sheffield; a fit of the gout will "do him infinite service; he is now in good spirits; and I re-"joice in his past sufferings as they will prolong his life. Give "many kisses for me to the dear Alphonso, and remember me "kindly to all friends, particularly my mother."

"EARTHAM, *January* 20, 1782.

"I have been scribbling so much longer than I intended to "the Muse, concerning an epitaph which she has written on your "friend Lady Miller, (of Bath Easton,) that I have hardly time, "or eyes left, to pay my devoirs as I wish to do to your majesty. "Not that the history of my week is a busy one; it may be "comprised in few words, for it has glided away in perfect "solitude. My only visitors have been my Christmas bills, "which I have collected on my table though I have not money "to pay them, as they make me work with redoubled fury;

Digitized by Google

" for of all things I detest being in debt, and I make my Pegasus " [illegible] fast as possible, to extricate me from it. I am at " present translating passages from [illegible] ourite Spanish poet " with great enthusiasm, as he delight[illegible]sh th[illegible]ach, and I intend to " give a very large representation of hi[illegible] my notes, which " will be very voluminous, and I fear still cost me several weeks " close labour; but in the midst of my solitary employments I " enjoy all your pleasures by reflection. I rejoice in the agree- " able day you passed at Bristol, and still more in all your musical " acquisitions. I shall expect you to out-sing the nightingale.

" The dear little Alphonso returns you his best thanks for " your kind solicitude concerning him. I must tell you with what " affectionate gallantry he returns your regard. I shewed him " the other day your miniature portrait from the cabinet, and " ever since he never enters this room without running to the " cabinet, and begging to have the picture produced: nay, he " will not eat his fruit after dinner, or be amused with any thing, " till he is gratified in this request. When the picture is taken out " and held to him, he looks at it very eagerly; kisses his hand " to it, and in about three or four minutes points to the cabinet " to have it hung up again with due care; and all this with such " endearing solemnity, as would highly delight you. He is " very lively and fond of play. Books are his favourite play- " things; you would be much diverted to hear him *pretend to* " *read*, and still more to see him imitate Nurse reading with " her magnifying glass; for this purpose he has seized an old " brass buckle to a door, and holding it by the screw, he directs

Digitized by Google

" his eye through the circular part of it, held over a book. In " short, I could write you a volume of his various amusing fancies. " He grows more and more fond of me, and calls me *papa*, which " he can speak very plain, though it is the only word he is per- " fectly master of; and he uses it very often, coming to me with " his hands joined together in a supplicating posture, whenever " he wants any thing; and like Moro's lifted paw, they are " almost irresistible. The old woman doats upon him to the " highest degree, and he keeps her in health by the exercise with " which he supplies her. Behold a long history of a very little " hero! but I know you will not think it uninteresting.—Accept " our united devotions."

" BATH, *January* 26.

" Your letter, I assure you, gave me more satisfaction than " any I have received for some time, as I think I discover in it, " that you feel yourself more at ease. I rejoice in the pleasure " which you derive from your favourite Spanish poet, and long " for the time when I shall be amused with him also. But your " history of the little Alphonso is what delights me most! and " *there* I look forward with the warmest enthusiasm, though with " a mixture of trembling, when I reflect on the precariousness " of such pleasures."

As Hayley composed a copious life of his son, soon after that beloved object of his incessant attention closed his early career of ingenuity and honour; and as that life was written expressly to display the dawn of genius in that extraordinary youth, it will

Digitized by Google

not be necessary to say much of him in this Memoir, which ought indeed (lest it should swell to an enormous size) to confine itself more and more to the literary and personal history of the poet. His next letter shews with what vexatious impediments he had frequently to contend in his exertions as an author. The continual tendency to inflammation in the eyes, which he suffered for several years, obliged him at this time to pass a few days at Chichester, for the sake of having a large portion of his present work transcribed by two friendly ladies. "They have promised to "work like attorney's clerks (says the poet to his Eliza,) if I "bring them my books and assist them to read my hasty scrawl. "Thus I get rid of business for a few days, which, in the state "of my eyes, must have engaged me a fortnight alone. In truth, "I know not how I shall be able to pursue my literary projects, "without a profest secretary. I believe I did not tell you that I "had some unsettled thoughts of taking a foreign one, whom I "met at Litchfield; you know I am as magnificent in my pro-"jects, for a poet, as my Lord Chatham was for a minister. "There dined once at the Episcopal Palace, a young Frenchman, "who had been a naval officer stationed there on his parole, as "he had been forced into that line of life by his relations, though "he had a passion for literature. He chose rather to remain in "this country; and has actually taught French at Litchfield at "the poor rate of two shillings a week for four lessons, though "he is really a gentleman in his manners, and has acquired a "thorough knowledge both of our language and of Italian. "When I returned home, having a letter from the Portuguese

Digitized by Google

" Ambassador to answer, I wished for a French secretary, and " the misfortunes of poor Ciseau (for that is his name) coming " strongly into my remembrance, I desired the Muse in a letter " to hint to him such an idea, as a project of her own. She " wrote me word that she did so; that he was delighted with " the bare mention of living with me; but she apprehended he " hardly wrote a hand good enough for a secretary. Here the " matter rests: now pray give me your opinion upon the point! " He is a pleasing, grave young man, about twenty-six, with the " appearance of being much softened by affliction, and is said " to bear a most amiable character. Do you think it eligible to " engage such a person in such a situation, provided he would " come on such a very moderate salary as my finances would " allow? Much may be said on both sides, *pro* and *con:* tell me " exactly how the scheme strikes you."

The reply of Mrs. Hayley to this question displays both the tenderness and liberality of her spirit.

" Bath, 17, 1782.

" You know I have long joined with your friends in wishing " you to have a secretary; and I was charmed with the descrip- " tion of Ciseau upon first reading your letter. I did, however, " like an Englishwoman, for some time revolve in my mind " the *pour* and the *contre.* All that appeared *contre,* was the " unfortunate disposition that we too often see in human nature, " to abuse the advantages we enjoy from a reverse of situation. " You know Madame Sevigné even mentions a man, that abused

Digitized by Google

"the privilege of being ugly; and yet I do not think, that the "French in general make so ungenerous a use of advantages as "we do; and this idea pleaded in favour of Ciseau, before I "conversed with Mrs. and Miss Cotton concerning his character. "From their report of him I really think you are likely to find a "great treasure in him. Mrs. Cotton is one of those amiable "females, whom you have introduced into the second edition of "your *Heaven.* She educates her niece (who is quite a Serena) "left under her care, with great propriety. They are inhabi-"tants of Litchfield; and Ciseau has taught Miss Cotton French "ever since she has been there, which they say is two years "and a half. During all that time they never heard him spoken "of but with the highest esteem; and I think when any persons "can stand the scrutiny of a little country town, they must be "at least unexceptionable. This seems the most important "inquiry, as talents and useful qualities manifest themselves. "Miss Cotton moreover affirms, that he writes a very legible "hand, and his modesty, they say, is such that you would not "suppose him to be a Frenchman. If you take him, I shall "immediately upon my return apply to Italian, and the little "Alphonso will be quite a little *Tuscan*, and probably converse "first in that tongue.

"Leonidas left us yesterday, after eleven weeks' sojourn. I "really think him one of the most uniform characters I ever met "with. Mrs. Pye and he used to read two or three newspapers "together every day, and enjoyed a great deal of rational "conversation; but I have unluckily no taste for *rationality;*

Digitized by Google

"so that my head was generally full of crotchets, when I might
"have been improving myself in sciences, that the wise think
"more useful and respectable. Nevertheless, music is, I know,
"in your estimation, as well as in mine, the most desirable
"lady-like accomplishment, and I am going to take about twelve
"lessons of a *crusty* master, who learnt of Kelway, and was
"master to Miss Guest. I mean to practise very hard to
"accompany the songs I learnt of Rauzzini, by the time he
"comes again, the 13th of next month. I chose my new mas-
"ter for having a great deal of the sour crab in his composition;
"as in general I think the first-rate teachers *too civil* to grown-
"up scholars; but this gentleman gave me a proof of his sin-
"cerity and attention, in the first interview; for upon desiring
"to see what I could do, in five minutes he complained of my
"*fingering* and *time*, and had not patience to let me go on till
"I reformed. This delighted me; it was just what I agreed
"for; and he afterwards said some civil things of my singing
"which I the more readily believed. My cousin Leeves is so
"delighted with Dr. Cotton, that he visits him frequently; and
"says he puts him wonderfully in mind of my father. I assure
"you Mrs. Cotton spoke of the Muse in terms that pleased me,
"as she said she had spent many pleasing hours in her com-
"pany, and should have continued to visit her in spite of reports,
"and of her having been dropt by many; but upon her niece's
"account, who is now only seventeen, a sweet girl with a very
"good fortune. The alias Serena says she met you one day
"walking in Litchfield; and I felt (as Madame Sevigné says of

Digitized by Google

"her messenger to her daughter) that I envied her the satis-
"faction. With kindest love to the little Alphonso, adieu."

From some passages in Hayley's letters of this year to his Eliza, it appears that in some periods of his life, he had felt something like parliamentary ambition, though he prudently repressed it. The following brief extracts will be sufficient on this point.

March 9, 1782.

"Chichester is in high bustle, with a contested election: a
"Hampshire gentleman, named Edwards, being introduced to
"oppose the Duke; but more of this in future letters!"

March 17.

"I give you great credit for your moderation, but it led you
"too far, when you forgot the nature of Hotspur so much, as to
"suppose it likely for him to appear among the vassals of his
"Grace in such a contest; after having said for some years that
"I considered his influence over the city unconstitutional and
"oppressive, I would much sooner have quarrelled with him to any
"degree, than have given my vote in confirmation of his power.
"I have, you know, an unquenchable passion for freedom; and
"had I not thought both my health and my fortune utterly
"unequal to the duties of the station, I verily believe you would
"have seen your H. member for his native city himself, but this is
"*entre nous*; as I could not approve in my own conscience, of
"either candidate, I resolved to be neuter, and give the
"people a fair chance of vindicating their liberty in the manner

Digitized by Google

"they chose. Had our medical friends and their connexion
"adopted this plan, (which I believe they now wish they had,)
"the people would have succeeded in their wishes."

The poet of Eartham thought he cousulted his own dignity and repose by avoiding to dabble in provincial politics, where he saw nothing that he could perfectly approve. His time and attention were sufficiently engaged by the variety of his compositions; for besides the extensive poem, that he was now hastening to publish, his correspondence with several literary friends occupied many of his hours, and gave rise to many occasional verses. Two little pieces of poetry were mentioned in his letters to Bath. The first made part of a packet to Miss Seward, and was benevolently intended to terminate in a little pleasantry, a too serious squabble between the two warm poetical spirits of the north, Seward and Darwin. The second little poem alluded to, was an epitaph, a species of composition to which Hayley was so much inclined, by his native tenderness of heart, that some years before his own decease, he had composed more than an hundred to oblige or commemorate different friends. The epitaph in question he was requested to write for the purpose of soothing the feelings of a deeply afflicted husband and father. He was not personally acquainted with the departed lady, and he was a little displeased with her sorrowing yet whimsical husband, when he discovered that this singular mourner had requested him and other poets to produce epitaphs on the object of his regret, for the purpose of comparing their various per-

Digitized by Google

formances, and picking from each such lines as happened to suit his own fancy; an odd incident, that suggested to Hayley, in a future season, the groundwork for one of his comedies in rhyme. The letter in which he mentions the success of the epitaph he was requested to write, seems entitled to a place in this memorial, as it shews the feelings of the poet for the interest and honour of his friend the historian.

"EARTHAM, April 7, 1782.

"I rejoice with you in the account of your musical entertain-
"ments, and condole with you on the mortifying circumstance
"of your not seeing our favourite historian as you expected.
"I still hope, however, that if his revenue is diminished by the
"annihilation of the Board of Trade, some equivalent will be
"found to support the dignity of the Roman eagle. I would
"not have him lose a feather of his wing, or an atom of his nest.
"If his appointment should be taken from him, without any thing
"to counterbalance the loss, I apprehend he will retire into
"France, which would be not only an affliction to his friends, but a
"disgrace to our country. Indeed, I think our nation should form
"some kind of establishment, to ensure ease and independence
"to her most eminent men of letters, a subject I intend to touch
"upon in one of the notes to my new poem. I have just had
"the satisfaction of seeing my first epistle in print; but as I
"am as prolix in my annotations, as a Dutch commentator
"I think the volume cannot be finished till after your return
"into Sussex. I apprehend I shall be able to meet you in

Digitized by Google

"Surrey, about the 20th of May. You will regulate your own "movements according to your own pleasure and convenience. "When you have fixed your time of travelling, I will send "the younger William across the country to attend you on the "road, as I would by no means have you travel without a "man servant.

"I believe there is not the slightest reason to fear, that the "late changes in administration can hurt the interest of the "friend for whom you were alarmed, and I hope they will "produce essential good to our country. Observe how patriotic "I am, not to hope any particular benefit to myself.

"In serious truth, if it pleases Heaven to give me health "and strength of mind to work hard, I had rather be indebted "to my own labour, than to any ministers whatever. Yet a "*certain* increase of annual income would be undoubtedly a "great comfort to me, and it would make me perhaps a *better*, at "least a *correcter*, poet. Apropos of my poetry. I have for "some weeks intended in every letter to tell you of a curious "little poetical triumph of mine, over no less a creature than your "friend the old Lion, alias Doctor Samuel Johnson. In the "haste of my weekly scrawls to you I have strangely omitted "a circumstance which vanity might have made me recollect.

"You know I wrote an epitaph on the poor friend and patient "of our dear Longinus, Mrs. R.; Johnson, who has been long "acquainted with her husband, wrote also an epitaph on the "same lady, and Longinus, who kindly sent me a copy of it, "assured me that mine was greatly preferred. He added that

Digitized by Google

"when the old Lion saw the lines I had written, without being "told the name of their author, he said, 'It is unequal, but "the man has much poetry in his mind.' If he is the very "*envious being* he is generally supposed to be, he will detest me "most cordially. I care not, I shall ever give him all the praise "that his extraordinary talents deserve. The four last lines of "his epitaph are very beautiful and sublime; the eight first "very weak and insipid. I keep the copy to amuse you on "your return."

This composition of Johnson has not yet been found among the papers of Hayley; or the two rival Epitaphs would have been here inserted together.

At present let us proceed to state, from the testimony of his letters, with what eager diligence he hastened to close his literary business of this season, that he might have leisure to meet his Eliza in Surrey, on her return from Bath. There were at this period two pleasant houses in Surrey, where the Hayleys were sure of being received with the most cordial welcome. The inhabitants of these were neighbours and friends. Governor Starke, a pleasing respectable old man, who acquired his title in the East Indies, resided with an accomplished wife and two pleasing young daughters at Epsom. Captain Conway, who had regarded Mrs. Hayley as a sister from their days of childhood, had recently settled on a pleasant spot a few miles from Epsom, where he was forming a too costly villa, distinguished by the name of Morden Park. He had been a most generous protector

Digitized by Google

to the Hayleys' young friend, Howell, sending him forth as a Cadet, to India; but his friendship and munificence on that occasion, belong more properly to the memoirs of Howell.

Let us return to the poet of Eartham preparing to visit his friends in Surrey. He had requested his Eliza to continue at Bath as long as she could derive from that residence increase of health, or musical delight and improvement. The extensive notes to his *Epistles on Epic Poetry* detained him at Eartham; and still working as hard as the state of his eyes would allow, till near the end of May. The following letter to his Eliza, on her reaching London, may serve to shew his intentions of future study, and his feelings as an author.

To Mrs. Hayley, at Capt. Conway's, Hart-street, Bloomsbury.

"EARTHAM, *May* 6, 1782.

"MY DEAR ELIZA,

"The news of your arrival in the metropolis gave me "great pleasure last night. As to the weighty sums you have "expended, if I am able, as I trust I shall be, to repay the dear "friend who has supplied them, I hope they will never more give "you an uneasy thought. Health and content can hardly be "bought too dear, and I flatter myself you will return with a "copious and long lasting fund of both. The state of our "exchequer, like that of his Majesty, will certainly make it "proper for me to adopt, like him, a future plan of economy; "and I flatter myself we shall do it with full as much grace and "good-will. It will be necessary for me to employ as many hours "of my life as my eyes and health will permit, in literary labour,

Digitized by Google

"and this, I thank Heaven, is full as much the dictate of "*inclination* as of *necessity:* I shall, therefore, pursue it with a "willing and a cheerful spirit. But a life so employed will neces-"sarily produce at times some degree of *dulness* and *taciturnity* "in the student; and as you have been used of late to more "idle and gay companions, I would prepare you to look on my "peculiarities with *affectionate indulgence;* as my works are "to supply us both with the comforts of life, if the *author* "frequently spoils the *companion*, I flatter myself the motive of "his application will endear to you even the dullest effects of it.

"I rejoice that you found our good friends in Hart-street so "well, and hope you will be equally fortunate in your arrival "at Epsom."

To the same.

"EARTHAM, *May* 19.

"I lament that you found any invalids in the house of the "hospitable governor, from whose roof I would wish to banish "every painful and every anxious sensation. I flatter myself "you will sing both our young friends into perfect health and "spirits; for I reckon the songs of such a voice as yours truly "medicinal to a delicate frame. I quarrel with the business "and the days that detain me from you all; but I begin to see "the end of my labour, and flatter myself I shall certainly "reach Epsom, where I shall hope to find you on the day I last "mentioned, viz., Monday the 27th. I rejoice in the idea that "this is the last time I am to talk to you on paper, Adieu! "Distribute my kindest wishes to all around you."

Digitized by Google

Hayley arrived according to his promise, and devoted three weeks with his Eliza, to their friends of Epsom and Mörden, visiting the metropolis occasionally, to hasten the publication of the work that had employed him so long.

The *Essay on Epic Poetry* appeared in June, and the author sent it, with a friendly letter to Mason, to whom the poem is addressed. It obtained a gracious reception from the public, as well as from the particular friends of the author. Of all the praises bestowed upon it, he chiefly valued the eulogy of Gibbon, contained in a letter from the historian to his amiable mother-in-law.

That eulogy was more gratifying to Hayley, than even the following letter from the illustrious poet to whom his production was addressed.

"ASTON, *June* 26th, 1782.

"DEAR SIR,

"You have honoured me more in your late elegant pub-
"lication, (which I received last week with a most obliging
"letter,) than out of respect to your own poetical reputation
"you ought to have done; and have, I fear, hazarded some of
"your great and deserved popularity, by so very partial an
"address to a writer who perceives his own credit with the
"public much on the decline; but who feels it without chagrin,
"and who will always be happy to find, that general applause
"conferred on a character so amiable, and talents so considerable,
"as yours, which he has ceased to solicit; sitting perhaps too

Digitized by Google

"easy to the taste of the times, and paying too little deference "to the leaders of that taste.

"Though you have dissented from the celebrated critic whom "you mention in a liberal manner, I must own to you, that I "have at present certain reasons for wishing, that no strictures "whatever on his writings had appeared in a work addressed to "me; and in which my name is so frequently mentioned with "so much unmerited praise. In like manner I am sorry to find "many censures on my dead friend Dr. Warburton, to say "nothing of other matters. I am surprised that in speaking of "the coarseness and impurity of his style, you should quote the "authority of that bear upon stilts, Johnson.

"You see, Sir, I write to you with great freedom: I trust you "will like it better than if I entered into a formal detail of the "many beautiful passages I have admired in your Epistles, and "the many judicious remarks which I approve in your notes. I "beg you will believe me to be, with the greatest respect and "esteem,

"Your too much obliged,
"but very grateful Servant,
"W. Mason.

"P. S.—If ever I travel your way, I shall certainly do myself "the pleasure to accept your obliging invitation, aud if you "travel northward, I shall hope you will not leave my quiet "Parsonage unvisited."

Hayley had not the pleasure of receiving the poet of the English garden in the beautiful scenery of Eartham; but he

Digitized by Google

was favoured with a visit from him in Cavendish-square, under the roof of his friend Romney, in a subsequent year; when his cheerful spirit was surprised and concerned, to find a man of Mason's acknowledged mental powers, so shaken in his manly frame by age and disappointments; and so soured in his temper, that according to his own declaration to his friendly eulogist, he received little or no pleasure from public praise, and much vexation from the coarse censure and malignant sneers, in which the reptiles of literature are apt, in all times, to indulge themselves against those successful authors, whose pre-eminence they cannot patiently endure; of such abuse, indeed, Mason had a full share, and probably the more for having been supposed the author of much anonymous but celebrated sarcastic poetry.

It was the good fortune of Hayley to have conceived in early life a supreme contempt for all calumny and detraction, of which some remarkable proofs will occur in the course of this Memoir. Let us at present return to his visit in Epsom. A poetical incident of a very singular kind happened to amuse him and his associates, while he was passing some nights under the roof of his hospitable old friend, Governor Starke. The poet had chanced to dine in London, in company with Romney and Meyer; the lively imagination of the latter was full of a subject for poetry, (the fate of a young and noble naval Captain, Lord Robert Manners,) and he vehemently pressed his friend Hayley, to write an elegy for the benevolent purpose of consoling the Duke of Rutland, the afflicted brother of the deceased. The Poet of Eartham declined the task, from his great dislike of

Digitized by Google

every thing that looked like adulation of nobility. But the subject had seized his fancy. The feverish influence that was prevalent at the time had rendered his sleep less quiet than usual, and in a dream he composed a complete elegy on the lamented officer. It was so impressed on his memory, that when he awoke in the middle of the night, he repeated the whole, which was founded on a celebrated passage in Demosthenes, concerning those who fell in the battle of Chæronea. But sinking into a second slumber before the dawn of day, he had forgot when he awoke again, all the stanzas except one.

After enjoying for some weeks the society of their friends in Surrey, and occasionally in London, the Hayleys returned to Sussex on the 15th June. The summer and autumn of this year afforded them much social delight from a succession of guests, whose talents were highly entertaining. Their first visitor was Mr. Saville, the celebrated singer of Litchfield. They were charmed with his powerful style of singing, and his extreme sensibility, with the ease and modesty of his deportment.

The grateful account that he gave of his reception, when he returned to his fair friend at Litchfield, Miss Seward, induced that lady, notwithstanding the advanced age of her father, to venture on the same distant excursion, and she gratified her friends of Sussex with a visit of several weeks; during which the pen of Hayley and the pencil of his friend Romney, were most cheerfully employed in delineating her various endowments, or in trying to entertain her in a manner congenial to her own sprightly and cultivated mind. Many little occasional *jeux d'esprit* arose

Digitized by Google

in the course of this interesting visit. Here it will be sufficient to insert the poet's welcome to this accomplished visitant, and the farewell which he composed on her departure.

IMPROMPTU,

To Miss Seward, on her arrival at Eartham, early in August, 1782.

Thou gathering host of churlish clouds!
Whose gloom the shrinking landscape shrouds,
  Disperse to distant skies!
With lustre radiant and serene,
To Seward's eye, thou lovely scene!
  Let all thy beauties rise!

With smiling, yet majestic, grace,
Old Ocean, shew thy awful face,
  Enrich'd with orient rays!
To meet her eye, whose soul benign
Has given thy naval chief to shine
  In fame's eternal blaze!

Ye Dryads of these happy groves,
Thro' which the welcome Seward roves,
  Our present joy attest!
Ye ne'er, since Nature form'd your shade,
A brighter visitant surveyed,
  Or hailed a dearer guest.

The kindness and the high colloquial as well as professional talents of Romney, formed no inconsiderable part of Seward's entertainment at Eartham, which she noticed with propriety and gratitude in her farewell:

Digitized by Google

To-morrow's dawn must bring th' unwelcome hour,
When my reluctant spirit's fond farewell,
Shall mourn in sighs, thro' Eartham's beauteous bower,
The vanished pleasures of the silvan cell,

The full luxuriance of yon sloping wood,
Circling the golden mead with pomp of shade,
And, where soft comfort's downy pinions brood,
The village bosomed in the blooming glade;

The path umbrageous up the steepy side
Of this sweet mount, where varied beauty glows,
While in bold curves the forest's lofty pride
Dark on th' opposing hill's high summit flows;

Then, as the grassy eminence ascends,
The champaign glories bursting on the sight,
Where far and wide the dazzling vale extends,
Closed by the distant main that rolls in light.

Groves half as fair as these may meet my eye;
Thy bowers, O Litchfield! lovely scenes afford;
But, ah! what keen regrets shall wake the sigh,
To miss the pleasures of th' Hayleyan board:

Where, as his pencil, Romney's soul sublime
Glows with bold lines, original and strong;
While fancy's lays, and kindred spirits chime
With fair Eliza's wit and melting song.

To thee, dear Bard! our master-spring of joy,
How shall I grateful breathe the soft farewell!
Yet long thy generous kindness shall employ
The heart it gladdened, in thy silvan cell.

Digitized by Google

A few passages from the letters that this fair enthusiast despatched to the friends she had left, in the course of her travels to her home, will strongly shew the warmth of her heart, and the brilliancy and tenderness of her mind.

"LONDON, from the House of DR. KNOWLES.

"LITTLE as I feel myself attuned to harmony, I scribbled with "a pencil the following lines, between Petworth and the next "stage:

"Bright orb! that pour'st in floods of azure day
"On these moist eyes thy uncongenial ray,
"Why robe with splendour the unwelcome hours,
"O'er which affection droops, and fancy lowers?
"Whose languid powers, since they no more inhale
"Their warmest spirit, in the Eartham gale,
"Send, as they seek a less-inspiring sky,
"The glance reverted, and the frequent sigh,
"To blooming Sussex, mid whose bright domain,
"The Muses on their new Parnassus reign;
"And Friendship, sweeter than their sweetest lyres,
"Pours her rich draught, and lights her purest fires.
"What, though no more, for me, her cordial flows,
"No more her joy-enkindling lustre glows,
"May the full tide in ceaseless currents stream!
"And gay and cloudless be the charming beam!

"Mrs. Knowles is very well, the same kind and interesting "being—as well and as kind is the good Doctor: our evening "was pleasing. The names of our Eartham friends were on our "lips. It seemed as if they were still present. Let me live in "the remembrance of you all."

Digitized by Google

The Mrs. Knowles, who for many years was the confidential friend of Miss Seward, was the fair ingenious Quaker, whose needle executed a curious portrait of the King. She had infinite vivacity and wit; and was a poetess also, though less sublime than her friend Anna.

The next letter of Miss Seward, to her friend in Sussex, speaks both of painting and music with so much enthusiasm, that the passages alluded to induce me to transcribe them. In describing a visit that she and Mrs. Knowles paid to the gallery of Romney, she says,

"When we found ourselves in the full blaze of the Romneyan "creation, all words are too weak to paint my wonder and delight. "It was the gaze of astonishment; it was the thrill of rapture. "Mrs. Knowles, who, if she has less *enthusiasm*, has much more "judgment, asserts the superiority of Romney's powers to those "of any other painter. As for the *Honora Serena*, I saw it "with Giovanni's eyes. I never beheld so entire and perfect "a resemblance. Such, and so lovely, was the object of my "everlasting tenderness.

"I had the pleasure of passing three or four hours with the "friend of my earliest youth, whom I have not beheld almost "twenty years, the author of the epigram on the Duke of R., "Mr. Mence. My venerable friend is grown personally venerable, "since we last met, being now fifty-eight years of age. But his "mind retains all its original fire and exquisite sensibility, which, "joined to the finest voice that ever warbled from the human "throat, *made* him and *keeps* him still the most glorious singer

Digitized by Google

" in the world. I was delighted to find that a temperate life had " preserved also his noble *voice* from the ravages of time. You " have heard me say that he was priest-vicar of our cathedral, " when first Giovanni became a member of it; the sublime *model* " on which our friend first formed his vocal harmonies.

" They are congenial beings, and their style of singing is very " different from any other person's; agreed to be so by all the " judges who have heard them. It is necessary to have all their " energies of spirit, their *poetic taste*, and melting tenderness of " heart, joined to delicacy of ear, sweetness of voice, and perfect " knowledge of the science, *to sing as they do*. The languid " elegance of the fashionable master can no more attain this " sublime point of excellence, than I can write like Shakspeare " and Milton. Partial as you probably think me to Giovanni, I " convinced my partiality does *not* bias me on *this* subject, " because I feel and own Mr. Mence soars to a still greater " height of perfection. He is more energetic, and if possible has " more pathos than Giovanni, with tones full as high, as rich, as " deep, and smooth.

" He sang to me a part of the finest anthem in the world. The " solemnity with which he uttered these words, 'Hide me in " the grave,' was beyond all conception; so was the matchless " elegance and pathetic sweetness, of 'There the wicked cease " from troubling, there the weary are at rest;' from which he " rushed at once into the notes of joy and triumph, in such a " divine Hallelujah; my spirit whispered while he sang it,

Digitized by Google

"Let the bright Seraphim in burning row,
"Their loud uplifted angel trumpets blow.

"Such instruments alone were worthy to have accompanied "him. What a loss had St. Paul's and the King's Chapel, of this "gentleman, when he retired from them, about fourteen years "ago. But in spite of my enthusiasm it is high time to go "to rest. Adieu."

Of this celebrated poetess we must now take leave, to specify what compositions of greater extent than mere occasional verses, employed the poet of Eartham, in 1782. From his letters of that year, we learn that he had then made a considerable progress in that series of dramas, which, in 1784, he published in a quarto volume, with the title of *Plays for a Private Theatre.* Dramatic composition had ever been a favourite of his fancy, and the ill treatment he received from various managers, instead of extinguishing his passion for the drama, only led him to indulge it, without exposing himself to mortification, by submitting his productions to their judgment or caprice. He had resolved to publish a collection of tragedies and comedies, singular in their form, and original in their plans. The state of his eyes rendered this a task that required much patience and time.

To advance with the greater expedition, he entertained new ideas of taking a profest secretary. We will close this chapter, and of course our account of the year 1782, with the greater part of a letter, in which the poet related to his Eliza then passing

Digitized by Google

some time with her mother in Chichester, a sort of tragi-comical disappointment, that he had just sustained in his fresh expectation of a serviceable secretary.

"EARTHAM, *October* 26, 1782.

"If you see our medical friend, be so kind as to thank him for "his letter by the young secretary he sent me. The poor lad "is much fitter for his patient than my amanuensis. His ague "fit came on him in his march hither, and both William and "Nurse on his arrival took him for a poor crazy fellow. Instead "of putting a pen into his hand, I gave him some electrical fire, "and put him to bed. He arose between nine and ten to-day, "and though I fear he will afford me much more trouble than "assistance (exclusive of his illness,) I cannot find in my heart, "as he seems distressed, and very willing to do what he can, to "send him back again, without exerting all my patience to assist "him in getting through a transcript of the tragedy. Being "to-day perfectly free from ague, he is tolerably well; but he "writes very slowly; and as he can with great difficulty make "out my hand, I am forced to correct him perpetually. From "the anecdote that our friend mentioned, of his fishing all night "after working all day, merely to purchase books with the "money he could raise by such unseasonable labour, I conceived "a very high idea of his genius and enthusiasm, and supposed "him almost a second Chatterton; but I find a very ardent desire "to learn is a very different thing from genius. I am now con-

Digitized by Google

" vinced by some laughable proofs, which I will tell you hereafter, " that he has not more of that rare endowment, than the table " which supports the heap of books now lying before me, If he " is able to finish the tragedy in the course of this week, I shall " think we do wonders, for he is horribly apt to blunder. He " has just written *nose* for *those*, and was utterly unable to cor- " rect the word from the sense of the line.

" The greatest misfortune is, that looking frequently at his " work breaks the thread of my own, and I feel that my comedy " on the stocks has suffered a little this morning.

" However, I will if possible, as I have said, let him hobble " through the tragic scenes; but sir Nicholas Odd fish must, I " believe, sue again to your ladyship's pen, to do him justice. " My young scribe, who has now been four hours writing, (for it is " two o'clock,) has not transcribed near so much as you did on the " single morning you attempted to transcribe the comedy. With " him, I believe, I shall disclaim all thoughts of assistance from " male secretaries, and female ones too, except your ladyship. " As few persons unite the inclination and the power to assist a " poor poet; I shall henceforth assume Crebillon's motto when " he renounced the great,

" ' Ne t'attends qu' à toi seul!'

" I have just been as highly flattered, as Moliere ever was " by his critical old woman, for Euryclea (Nurse) has been " shaking her sides with hearty laughter at some scenes in my " new comedy. Adio!"

Digitized by Google

Hayley employed his last months of this year in preparing his collection of five new plays for the press; and from his letters, in the first month of 1783, we shall learn in what light his singular enterprise appeared to some of his most accomplished literary friends in London.

Digitized by Google

BOOK THE SEVENTH.

CHAPTER I.

OCCURRENCES AND COMPOSITIONS OF 1783.

HAYLEY appears to have visited the metropolis early in 1783, for the important purpose of deriving all the fair emolument he could from his extensive dramatic labours, without submitting any one of his five plays to the arrogance of a manager. We shall find that by disdaining to court the favour of these imperious gentlemen, he led some of them to solicit favours from him. But the compliment they paid him, by requesting leave to exhibit some of his dramas, was so far from producing any pecuniary advantage, that he was actually permitted to pay for admission to the box, in which he saw one of his tragedies and one of his comedies successfully represented! But of this in a future year.

The following letter announces his arrival under the roof of his favourite Romney;

To Mrs. Hayley, Chichester.

"January 1783, Cavendish-square.

"MY DEAR ELIZA,

"I had the pleasure of finding the *caro pittore* in high health and spirits. We had only a glimpse of Longinus in

Digitized by Google

"the evening, on his return from a rural expedition to the "funeral of the whimsical good little friend he has lost. By "the knavery of the undertaker, their horses were knocked up. "The mourning coach and six, travelled three hours in the "dark, and very narrowly escaped being robbed, by the lucky "incident of the highwayman's horse taking fright at the dis-"mality of the equipage; an adventure which our comic friend "described in so droll a manner, as to turn the funeral into a "perfect comedy.

"I am most comfortably quartered, as I feel my host is really "happy in his visitor.

"I have just rapped at Gibbon's door; he is at Bath and will "not return this fortnight: perhaps it is for the best, as I hope "then to be more at leisure. Longinus is to dine here to-day, and "I am just going to invite Arnold and Meyer; but the party "will hardly hear a syllable of my new dramas, as the irresistible "Mrs. Siddons plays Jane Shore to-night; her sister appears "on the stage for the first time as Alicia, and William is just "despatched to secure places if possible, for the painter and the "poet.

"Night. I have seen Conway, I have written to Godfrey, I "have beheld Mrs. Siddons; enough in one day both for friend-"ship and pleasure! Our friends are all well. Mrs. Siddons is "more excellent than words can express, yet your observations "had some foundation; but I can only add, *bon soir*. Romney "adds his best wishes to my benediction.

Digitized by Google

To the same.

January 9.

"I am this instant returned from an inquiry I have been "making concerning your set of Madame Genlis. I can only "learn, the books were bought and paid for by a gentleman "commissioned to make the purchase, by a lady whom I still "suppose to be your friend Mrs. Montague.

"I saw, from the pen of that celebrated lady, the most flat-"tering picture of myself that I have ever beheld; and perhaps "it pleased me the more, as I had not the least expectation of "seeing it. On my calling yesterday morning on the young "Muse, (Helen Maria Williams,) she told me she had an inten-"tion of dedicating her *Poem* to Mrs. Montague, who has "indeed behaved with the most friendly politeness to her; and "upon my expressing the highest approbation of her design, she "produced a letter from Mrs. Montague to her on the subject, "which contained the portrait I have mentioned. She had "dined with her patroness the preceding day, and her manuscript "is now in Portman-square, where I intend to pay my devoirs "this morning, as the great lady expressed great joy on the news "of my being expected in London. I have many things to tell "you, but can hardly find time or eyes to commit them to "paper; I must therefore endeavour to say much in few words. "My new *Comedy* is highly approved by the critics; and "Henderson, who dines here to-day with Arnold, Meyer, and "Longinus, will probably recite the *Tragedy* this evening.

"Dodsley and I have taken an eternal but a civil leave of

Digitized by Google

" each other; and without his knowing or inquiring a syllable " concerning my new intended publication. I always derive new " spirits from mortified ambition, and on the whole I rejoice in " our final adieu. As soon as Gibbon returns to town, I shall " negotiate with Cadell; pray keep this intelligence to yourself.

" The noble Captain (Conway) set forth yesterday on a five " weeks' visit to Badnington. I have only seen him for ten " minutes; we missed each other twice: this town is perpetually " the scene of such disappointments, and I almost pant to return " again to my favourite hermitage. I believe no mortal was " ever so passionately fond of retirement as I am; yet I have " many friends here whose society is delightful, as their affection " to me is undoubted. But I must throw down my pen, to make " the visits I have mentioned.

" Two o'clock. I have called on Mrs. Montague, and Lady " Miller (of Lavant); the first I did not see, the latter I found " reading her Bible. Henderson has just sent a note, to say he " is detained at home by the extreme illness of his wife: another " disappointment. Adio; I am just walking out again with " Carwardine.

" Night. Ten o'clock. The drama is just closed with grand " applause: my eyes are so heated by rehearsing it, I can only " add, *Bon soir*."

The anecdote mentioned in this letter, of the poet's separation from Dodsley, was of considerable importance to his literary prospects. Dodsley had been his constant publisher since the

Digitized by Google

first appearance of the *Epistles to Romney*. He had given, what the poet himself thought, very liberal prices for every work that he purchased; but he had a most ungracious mode of grumbling at his bargains, without reason for complaint, to such an offensive degree, that Hayley once said to him, "Mr. Dodsley, I hardly ever enter your shop, but you make me almost wish to throw my works into the sea, because you murmur so very unreasonably at the sums they have cost you. Now it must ever be a source of pain to me to occasion loss or discontent to any man, and to avoid all possibility of my doing so, I wish you would let me re-purchase all the copyright that I have sold to you at different times." This, however, the testy grumbler long refused, till Hayley, on finding that he must sell any new works to great disadvantage, if his old publisher remained the proprietor of his earliest publications, prevailed on his worthy friend, Thomas Paine, the elder, of the Mews-gate, to negotiate with Dodsley for this purpose: and by the means of this friendly mediator, he actually bought himself, at the price of £500. But the churlish reluctance of Dodsley to sell the copyright of what had proved very profitable to him, and the timorous avidity of Cadell to make a good bargain for himself as the publisher, but not the purchaser, of a popular author's present and future compositions, occasioned so much delay, that even with the aid of Gibbon's mediation, it was long before the poet and his new bookseller could settle the terms of their connexion; as past experience had taught Hayley to keep the copyright of whatever he printed within his own jurisdiction.

Digitized by Google

From delays in these negotiations, his volume of Dramas did not appear till the year 1784; and the only composition that he printed in 1783, was an Ode addressed to his friend Wright, the eminent painter of Derby: not printed for immediate publication, but to cheer the dejected spirit, and encourage the pencil, of that amiable artist. Before we explain the origin, and notice the success of this friendly ode, let us shew, by extracts from the sequel of the poet's letters, what encouragement he received from his literary friends during his visit in the metropolis.

To Mrs. Hayley, Cavendish-square.

"January 16th, 1783.

"You will rejoice to hear that the Roman Eagle flew safely "to his nest from Bath. He arrived last night, and I visited him "at ten this morning. His cordiality towards me has given me "more pleasure than any thing that I have met with in the course "of my travels. He has promised to sit to Romney for me on "Saturday; and we are to change the scene, from the house of the "friendly painter, to Bentinck-street, and dine all together under "the roof of the great historian. He is impatient to see my new "work. I read him the dedication, with which he declared himself "highly pleased, and ensured it a favourable reception from the "fair Duchess. He is to hear one of my Comedies on Saturday "evening, and he seemed highly flattered by being made "acquainted with secrets which I have concealed from Warton "and Steevens, who have both endeavoured, in vain, to find out "the nature of my intended publication. From Gibbon, I

Digitized by Google

" proceeded to the great Mrs. Montague, and was honoured with " a *tête-à-tête* in her magnificent mansion. Our whole discourse " turned on the poem of the young Muse, which she criticised " with infinite spirit and judgment, and with the most friendly " severity. She asked me to dine again with her on Saturday; " but I had just engaged myself to Gibbon, and am not sorry to " avoid that ceremony. Beridge comes to town this evening, and " Henderson dines with us to-day. My eyes are so very tender, " I must throw down my pen and add a few lines in the evening.

" Night.—Henderson has just amused us by reading *The Two* " *Connoisseurs*. He admired it exceedingly; but thought the " rhyme unfit for a public stage, as it is so difficult to recite " without an unpleasing monotony. Many thanks for your kind " and comfortable letter. I am pleased with your musical " history, and never grudge any sum expended on your improve- " ment in that enchanting art. Good night. I am to breakfast " and pass a long morning at Hampstead, to-morrow."

To the same.

" Cavendish-square, Friday, January 17.

" As I love to make you a sharer in every pleasing occurrence " of my life, I cannot let a post depart, without despatching to " you an account of a circumstance which has given me no little " delight.

" Beridge last night committed a box to my care, declaring it " contained something for me, but requesting that I would not " open it till he arrived here to-day. After spending an agreeable

Digitized by Google

" morning at Hampstead, with Steevens, I met the dear physi-
" cian in Cavendish-square; and while I was dressing, he displayed
" his skill as a carpenter, in opening the packing case. When
" I came from my dressing chamber to the dining room, he sur-
" prised me with an exquisite picture of Virgil's tomb, by Wright,
" putting into my hand a letter from that very amiable artist,
" requesting my acceptance of this poetical scene, and adding,
" that the splendid frame which contained it was the gift of
" Dr. Beridge.

" Romney, Carwardine, and Stevenson, have been lavish in
" their praise of this exquisite performance; and how it has
" delighted me, you, who are acquainted with my feelings, will
" be perfectly able to imagine.

" This, thou dearest partner of our joy! I have thought fit to
" impart to thee, lay it to thy heart, and farewell!

" P. S.—Steevens tried every artifice of conversation to dis-
" cover the nature of my intended publication; but I persevered
" in keeping my secret. I am engaged to drink tea with Mrs.
" Bates, (the exquisite singer) on Thursday next, at the house of
" the young Muse, (Miss Williams,) who is also musical. In
" spite of all these delights, I suffer so much in the eyes, from
" the bustle and heat of this town, that I heartily wish myself
" restored again to my own cool and tranquil hermitage. Adieu."

To the same.

" Ten o'Clock Saturday Night, January 18, 1783.

" We are this instant returned from the Roman Eagle, who
" has proved his generous and imperial spirit, by the reception

Digitized by Google

" he gave us. Romney has seized him most happily on canvass, " and I have been doubly delighted by the success of the *Caro* " *Pittore*, and the applause which the great historian has bestowed " on my *Two Connoisseurs*, which I recited to him in the course " of the evening. He called it the boldest of poetical attempts; " but declared himself astonished and delighted by the happiness " of its execution.

" I found your kind letter on my table: accept my thanks for " it! and as my eyes are much fatigued with reading, allow me " to say *Bon soir*. I am charmed with your portrait of your " mother: give my love to her.

" Gibbon has behaved most kindly in regard to Cadell, and " we are to have an interview on Monday.

" I hope to reach home about Monday se'nnight, and shall " probably incline to fix on Midhurst as the place of our " meeting, lest the snow should blockade us at Lavington. God " bless you! I have written in some pain, but should have felt " much more, had I not exerted my jaded eyes to give you this " pleasant intelligence by the first post in my power."

To the same.

" Tuesday Night, January 21, 1783.

" My present negotiations are so much like those that have " held the world in suspense about peace and war, that you must " not expect an explicit or definitive account of them, till my " return. I propose, at present, to have the happiness of meeting " you at Midhurst, on Monday or Tuesday; for I eagerly pant

Digitized by Google

" to bid this scene of bustle adieu, and to enjoy once again my " dear engaging retreat. Every peep at the world endears " retirement to me more and more.

" Steevens breakfasted here this morning: and you would " have thought that all the brilliancy of his *genius* could not " atone for the malignant sarcasms which he levelled at the new " portrait of Gibbon, when he heard it was designed for me. " But all these little anecdotes I must reserve for our future " conversation.

" Your letter to Mr. Marsh is just what it ought to be. Lon- " ginus and I have just brought a copy of the poem from the " little fretful porcupine of Pall Mall: and it shall be sent with " your letter to-morrow.

" Dodsley wishes still to retain me, and it is possible you may " still see us re-united. But you must summon all your philo- " sophy to bear suspense on this topic, as I shall hardly be able " to tell you any thing definitive till my return. Rejoice, how- " ever, that I am well, and ever

" Your affectionate H."

Some passages in these extracts seem to require a few comments. It was with much cordial concern, that Hayley felt himself obliged to notice the mischievous foibles of his early friend Steevens, with whom he had been intimate from the time that he first became a student of Cambridge. He admired the various talents, and delighted in the colloquial powers, of that extraordinary man, who with many enchanting and many noble

Digitized by Google

qualities, was at times subject to such deplorable fits of envious vanity, that the poet of Eartham was gradually obliged to break off all intercourse with that dangerous intimate, whom in brilliancy of mental powers, both serious and sportive, he regarded as the very first of his cotemporaries. But to those fascinating powers, Hayley was ever ready to render affectionate justice; and so far forgot the offences and infirmities of this once enchanting companion, that on his decease, at the request of Steevens's brother commentator, the benevolent Isaac Reid, he composed an epitaph for his monument, in which all his brighter qualities are warmly and faithfully commended. Steevens was miserably jealous of the superior regard that Hayley paid to Gibbon: but that superior regard was justly due to the friendly historian, who on all occasions appeared zealous to promote the literary reputation and the pecuniary interest of Hayley, which the critic of Hampstead had been found in his private machinations, more inclined to injure than to serve; even at the time when he openly professed the most cordial attachment to the poet of Eartham. It was the upright, zealous, and fearless spirit of Meyer, who revealed to Hayley the duplicity of this dangerous associate; and thus put him on his guard against a singular literary snare, by which Steevens seemed to have formed a plan for rendering the poet a fair object of ridicule. This riddle will be explained, when we arrive at the incident to which it alludes, and which did not occur till the dramas of Hayley had been published, and his tragedy of *Lord Russel* introduced on the stage.

Digitized by Google

Let us return to extracts from the letters of the poet.

To Mrs. Hayley, Chichester.

"Thursday Night, January 23, 1783.

"My dear Eliza,

"We are just returned from a visit, our ears still ring-
"ing with the echo of the most angelical singing I ever heard.
"Mrs. Bates, the fair and friendly object of my musical idolatry,
"flattered me not a little by first singing, 'From glaring show
"and giddy noise;'—'She did enchant me with mine own conceits,
"and I have thanked her for it.' I am somewhat inclined to hope
"that she will visit you in Sussex, as the office of her husband,
"(my old school-fellow,) sometimes leads him to Portsmouth.
"The eagle sat again to-day, and grows very happily under the
"pencil of our friend: we are to dine with him again on Saturday,
"and I have some thoughts of decamping the next morning, so
"eager am I to meet you, and regain my favourite hermitage,
"in spite of the various delights of music, painting and friendship.
"But I will scribble again to you to-morrow. Adieu! Love to
"your mother."

To the same.

"Friday Night, January 24, 1783.

"Let me first wish you joy of the peace, though the eagle
"seems to think it a bad one. The assurance of it arrived at
"Lord Shelburne's last night at six o'clock.

"Many thanks for the song just arrived. I lament the loss of
"your voice; and if your cold is violent, beg you will not think

Digitized by Google

" of travelling to meet me this cold weather, but wait in your " warm quarters, or proceed directly to Eartham, as you feel " most disposed."

Mrs. Hayley was at this time in Chichester, on a visit to her mother. That amiable lady, now upwards of seventy, had so far recovered from her calamitous alienation of mind, that she was able to enjoy a quiet game of cards, and a little placid society.

Hayley had the cordial gratification of tranquillizing the agitated spirits both of the mother and her child. He had a most tender regard for the virtues and the misfortunes of this hapless parent, and doubly expressed his respect for her memory, by a monument in the cathedral, from the chisel of his friend Flaxman, and an elegy on her death, which he did not give to the public, as it contained domestic anecdotes suited only to the inspection of private and confidential friends. There is, however, much pathos in this singular poem; and some stanzas, from the opening and the close of it, seem to claim a place in this chapter.

ELEGY,

ON A LADY WHO LABOURED UNDER AN INSANITY OF MANY YEARS, AND RECOVERED IN THE CLOSE OF A LONG LIFE AN IMPERFECT USE OF HER REASON. 1783.

Open, thou peaceful grave! receive a guest,
  Freed from the heaviest ills of ling'ring life;
Receive her, passing to angelic rest
  From mental discord and corporeal strife!

Pure Spirit, go! where truth alone may dwell!
  Where the mind's eye is cleared from every spot;
And Pity's tributary song shall tell
  The various evils of thy earthly lot.

Digitized by Google

No common ill that levity neglects,
  These plaintive numbers of thy bard disclose:
The clouded current of thy life reflects
  The dark sublime of unexampled woes.

To fancy's sight, th' eventful hours revolve,
  That cast each colour o'er thy chequered years;
Short gleams of joy in grief's deep shades dissolve,
  And all the horror of thy fate appears.

In life's warm noon, I see thee smiling sit,
  Thy board with Hymen's blooming fruitage crown'd;
No dreams of future ill around thee flit;
  Love, peace, and joy thy genial bed surround.

Thy veins with fond parental pride expand;
  Firm living pillars seem thy bliss to prop:
But struck untimely by death's ruthless hand,
  They shake, and soon in sad succession drop.

I see thee now, in sorrow's deepest gloom,
  Circled, like Niobe, by children dead:
Connubial duty tears thee from their tomb,
  To raise their agonizing father's head.

Thy glorious spirit, to assuage his grief,
  Sinks in mute pain thy own convulsive sigh;
Firmly renounces nature's moist relief,
  And checks the torrent of thy tearful eye.

Yield to our general parent's kind behest!
  Allow the heart-relieving stream to flow;
Or he, for whom thy sorrows are supprest,
  Will feel thy comfort turn to keener woe.

Digitized by Google

Ill-fated love! too generously kind!
  Weak nature fails thy struggle to sustain;
The pent afflictions of the mother's mind
  Tear the bruised fibres of her tortured brain.

Thou ill-starr'd parent! misery's pangs have wrung
  Thy mental frame, till all its vigour dies:
Lost reason wanders from thy babbling tongue,
  And speculation quits thy glaring eyes.

Yet thou hast lost the memory of thy woes;
  And moody madness brings thee dread relief:
Thy pangs are hush'd, but what heart-piercing throes,
  What horrors aggravate thy husband's grief!

His eyes, that lately wept his withered race,
  With tearless anguish now intensely burn;
Fix'd on his much-loved maniac's varying face,
  And vainly watching reason's wish'd return.

Lost to th' endearing offices of life,
  She still is watched by firm affection's gaze;
To the crazed spirit of his piteous wife,
  The faithful husband purest homage pays.

For her he shuns gay friendship's festive band,
  To share insanity's insensate hour;
To mark her babbling lip, or aid her hand,
  Her trifling hand, to frame the mimic flower.

In these fond cares he passes manhood's prime;
  In these he still is found by creeping age,
When nature, and the warning voice of time,
  Bid him prepare to quit the mortal stage.

Digitized by Google

In peace, kind spirit! praised by age and youth!
Depart! and hear applauding angels own
The generous firmness, and the tender truth,
By thee in scenes of sternest trial shown!

Heaven calls him hence; but dying he defends
The widowed lunatic he leaves on earth;
Placed in the guard of his selected friends,
Touched by her woes, and conscious of her worth.

For her, his provident and tender zeal
Had raised the comfortable neat abode;
And, that her peaceful age no want might feel,
On her his gathered treasure he bestowed.

In speaking of the afflictions of this amiable Divine in his old age, the poet thus alludes to his own marriage:

To soothe his grief, two daughters yet remain,
The living offspring of his hapless bed;
And from indulgent Heaven, his prayers had gained
The joy, to see his young Eliza wed.

His soul, to shield her from all earthly harms,
Had bow'd incessant to the Powers above;
And with keen joy, in Hymen's guardian arms
He placed this child of his disastrous love.

Keen was his joy, yet with affliction mixt,
That no glad mother shared his fond delight;
Her rayless eyes, in vacant wonder fixt,
Blest with no speaking tear, that nuptial rite.

Nor melting joy, nor grief's more potent swell
Force from those stony orbs the kindly tear;
No shower they shed, e'en when her husband's knell
Proclaims the heaviest loss the heart could fear.

Digitized by Google

Razed from her mind is every fond record,
That love and nature bid us ne'er forget;
Her orphan children, and her buried lord
Awake no anxious care, no keen regret.

In this dead calm, far through the vale of years
She passed, when, from the clouds of mental strife
Emerged, her reason, with dim light, appears,
And leads the lost one back to social life.

This memorable sufferer lived but a few years after the imperfect revival of her understanding, and in the close of the Elegy, the poet thus addresses her departed spirit.

Ascend! and in the world of peace rejoin
The cherished partner of thy earthly woe!
Share the immortal palm, from hand divine,
For the long conflict ye sustained below!

Pure shades! whose love endured no common test!
Survey the suff'ring offspring ye have left!
Regard your poor Eliza's wounded breast,
So long of your parental care bereft!

And while ye view her with angelic ken,
From scenes of sanctified repose above,
Approve this record, from affection's pen,
Of your unequall'd woes, and matchless love!

Let us now attend the poet in a poetical exercise of a more cheerful cast. In the summer of 1783, he printed, and distributed, without regular publication, an Ode to his friend Wright, the eminent artist of Derby. The last stanzas of the poem, and

Digitized by Google

an extract from a letter of the painter, will be sufficient to shew the origin and effect of this friendly ode.

Just in thy praise, thy country's voice
Loudly asserts thy signal power;
In this reward mayst thou rejoice,
In modest labour's silent hour!
Far from those seats where envious leagues,
And dark cabals and base intrigues
Exclude meek merit from his proper home!
Where art, whom royalty forbade to roam,
Against thy talents closed her self-dishonoured dome!

When partial pride and mean neglect
The nerves of injured genius gall,
What kindly spells of keen effect
His energy of heart recall:
Perchance there is no spell so strong,
As friendship's sympathetic song;
By fancy link'd in a fraternal band,
Artist and Bard in sweet alliance stand;
They suffer equal wounds, and mutual aid demand.

Go! then, to slighted worth devote
Thy willing verse, my fearless Muse!
Haply thy free and friendly note
Some joyous ardour may infuse
In fibres, that severely smart
From potent envy's poisoned dart.
Through Wright's warm breast bid tides of vigour roll!
Guard him from meek depression's chill control
And rouse him to exert each sinew of his soul!

Digitized by Google

The poet had felt that he owed some tribute of gratitude to this amiable painter, for that unexpected and valuable present, his sweet moonlight picture of *Virgil's Tomb;* and he pleased himself in the hope of cheering the depressed spirit of a suffering genius, who had injured his health by the perilous ardour of incessant application, during his studies at Rome. It was a favourite maxim of Hayley, that every poet ought to render his lyre an instrument of beneficence, and to regard both emolument and fame as secondary objects, far inferior to the delight of consoling merit under oppressive neglect, and of animating acknowledged talents to new and happy exertion.

Though he had not the gratification of doing all the good to his friend Wright that his sanguine spirit wished and expected, yet his friendly verse had certainly a beneficial effect on the mind and pencil of that very interesting artist; as appears from the following letter, and still more from his subsequent pictures, many of which arose from the suggestions of his friend.

To William Hayley, Esq.

"DERBY, *August* 31, 1783.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"IT is recommended to the painters, who wish to become "eminent, to let no day pass without a line. How contrary, "alas! has been my practice; a series of ill health for these "sixteen years past, (the core of my life,) has subjected me to "many idle days, and bowed down my attempts towards fame

Digitized by Google

"and fortune. I have laboured under an annual malady some "years, four and five months at a time; under the influence of "which I have now dragged over four months, without feeling a "wish to take up my pencil, till roused by your very ingenious "and very friendly Ode, in which are many beautiful parts, and "some sublime. Perhaps had I then been furnished with proper "materials for the action of Gibraltar, I should have begun my "fire; but for want of such instructions I soon sunk into my "wonted torpor again, from which as the weather grows cooler, "I hope to awaken.

"Mr. Wedgewood approves of your subject of *Penelope*, as a "companion to the *Maid of Corinth*. You mention the boy "Telemachus being pale and feverish: pray is there any "authority in history for it? or have you mentioned it to "give more character and expression to his mother? When I "know this I shall make a sketch of it, and consult you "further about it.

"Some little time ago I received one hundred copies of your "charming Ode, (would I deserved what your warm friendship "has lavished on me,) some of which I distributed among my "friends; but would it not be more advantageous to me, to "spread abroad the rest when my picture is finished? especially "if I make an exhibition of it with some others.

"I am, dear Sir,

"With the greatest esteem,

"Your much obliged Friend,

"J. WRIGHT."

Digitized by Google

This amiable valetudinarian revived in good time to execute many delightful pictures; but several of these we shall have occasion to notice when we arrive at the season of that singular exhibition, which, as his letter intimates, he was now beginning to plan.

Wright was not the only painter to whom Hayley addressed poetical good wishes in the year 1783, for in that year his lively friend Meyer escorted his highly-promising eldest son to Portsmouth, where, finding the India ships not ready for the youth to embark, they accepted Hayley's invitation to pass the anxious interval of delay at Eartham. During that visit, Meyer executed his exquisite portrait of the little Alphonso, then in his third year: and the poet addressed a few valedictory stanzas to the juvenile adventurer, prepared for a highly honourable, though brief, civil, and literary, career in India. The stanzas formed an inscription in a copy of *Orme's History of Indostan.*

Various incidents of this year induced Hayley to make several hasty and brief visits to London, in May; to negotiate again with Cadell, by the mediation of Gibbon, and to escort his good friends of Derby, the Beridges, to Eartham. In July, the zeal of his friendship for Mr. Long induced him to fly again to the metropolis, in the hope of obtaining votes, to place his friend as a surgeon in the Hospital of St. Bartholomew.

His alertness on that occasion is expressed in the following billet:

Digitized by Google

To Mrs. Hayley, at Eartham.

"ROMNEY'S Parlour, *July* 30, 1783.

"I shall soon learn the art of reaching Cavendish-square by "the breakfast-hour of the *caro pittore*, if I improve at this "rate in velocity; for, to his great surprise, I arrived here soon "after twelve.

"Our friends are well, and the dear Longinus entertains great "hopes of success. I am glad I obeyed the spirited dictates of "friendship, as Romney was going to write, and solicit my pre-"sence on the occasion, in spite of Longinus's prohibition.

"The Eagle is well, but eloped on a distant visit for a few "days, so perhaps I may not reach home on the day I intended. "Whether I shall be able to bring off the great painter is also a "matter of doubt. However, at all events, I rejoice that I came, "and hope to do some little good."

The following gives a cheerful account of his canvass for votes in the city.

To the same.

"*August* 1, 1783.

"MY DEAR ELIZA,

"I seize a pen to tell you I have passed an agreeable and "successful morning with those animated geniuses in petticoats, "the Ladies Knowles and Hayley.

"The fair Quaker introduced me to our cousin; and though "she is certainly like her brother John Wilkes, in masquerade,

Digitized by Google

"I thought her one of the most pleasing women I have met in "my travels.

"She was extremely polite and cordial in her manner of "embracing the interest of my friend: I was singularly fortunate "in catching her, as she sets out to-morrow for Dover. She "is still a great merchant, preparing at present to send two "ships of her own to America, She intends to visit that country "in person next year, and offered to carry your friend the blind "philosopher in her train. I told her, with a smile, she should "add the poet to her retinue, and appear in the character of "Commerce, supporting the arts and sciences. In truth, she "may well support them, if she prospers in her voyage, as she "is going to collect commercial debts to the amount of £98,000.

"Evening.—The Academy in Chancery-lane; present the "President Longinus, and the Signors Romney and Flaxman, all "in deep consultation on monuments, chimney-pieces," &c.

On the morrow the poet said to the same correspondent:

"We are all well and in good spirits, in spite of the most "intense heat ever felt in this city. Romney, Flaxman, and I, "have spent the afternoon and evening in Westminster Abbey. "'Tis now so late, I can only say you shall see me on Monday "evening. Adio!

"At all events, I am pleased with my journey to town, and "shall be more pleased, I trust, with my return."

Hayley was much delighted with that engaging warmth of

Digitized by Google

heart with which several of his new acquaintance assisted him in obtaining votes for Mr. Long, particularly his namesake and cousin, the widow of Alderman Hayley. Her kind exertions on this occasion gave rise to a sonnet on her voyage to America, which is printed in the works of the poet.

It will appear from passages in his letters of 1784, that his frequent visits to London in that and the preceding year, did not enable him to conclude his perplexed literary negotiations, but they afforded him materials for adding to the group of his dramatic compositions. His first idea was, to print only a trio of plays; but the unexpected delays that he met with in negotiating with the bookseller, from whom he wished to disengage himself, and also with a new literary merchant, extended so far, that they allowed him abundance of time to make his dramatic volume consist of five dramas instead of three. It was in an early canvass for votes to serve his friend Mr. Long, that he discovered what served him as the groundwork of his most admired comedy, *The Two Connoisseurs.* In soliciting the interest of an old acquaintance, from whom he had a right to expect the most zealous co-operation, he found, to his surprise and concern, that all the better qualities of that acquaintance had been converted into cold-hearted vanity, and a fantastic servile attention to the predominant passion of his wife,—a passion for *nick nacks.* The dramatic author was hence induced to give a good moral lesson to those who allow themselves to be so absorbed by frivolous pursuits, as to neglect and violate the duties of friendship.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER II.

OCCURRENCES AND COMPOSITIONS IN 1784.

SUCH a variety of impediments had retarded the progress of Hayley, in publishing the volume of his plays for a private theatre, that they did not appear till the spring of 1784. A letter of Miss Seward, in which she thanks her friend of Sussex for the volume she had just received, and of which she speaks with all the enthusiastic applause of friendly partiality, is dated March 25. In a subsequent letter she says of the dedication, "The verses to the lovely Duchess are as rich in beauty, as the fair form they celebrate." These words afford a striking proof that sometimes the Muse of Litchfield

"Could hear
Praise of a sister with unwounded ear."

And the lovely Duchess was one whom the poetess might have envied as a rival, both in beauty and talents. The circumstance that induced Hayley to dedicate his dramas to this fascinating lady, was an anecdote imparted to him in conversation by the Roman historian, who was equally her admirer.

"You live so much in retirement," said Gibbon to the poet, "that perhaps you are not aware to whose animated praise and patronage your Serena has been indebted for some portion of

Digitized by Google

her instantaneous popularity. I do not mean to intimate, that she could have failed of success, without such friends; yet certain it is, that in the very season of her birth, she was very warmly befriended by two powerful sponsors, the Duchess of Devonshire, and my Lord North." "No, indeed! (replied the poet) I was not before apprized of this honour. I am thankful towards my two noble friends, and as I do not approve of mere silent gratitude towards a very lovely woman, whose countenance I have often contemplated with admiration, I shall seize the first fair opportunity of expressing to the graceful Duchess my sense of her favour, and the delight that I receive from her applause."

The dedication of his plays was this intended tribute of gratitude, and a tribute very graciously accepted. It would probably have been presented to the Duchess by the hand of the historian himself, had he remained in England; but several months before that day arrived, he had escaped from the political tornado, which had deprived him of a lucrative appointment, and had taken refuge at Lausanne. The indignant spirit with which Hayley lamented this exile of his illustrious friend, appears in the following passage of a letter, that he sent from London to his Eliza at Eartham, in May 1784, "Poor Gibbon! "I hear he is supposed to be sunk into the most deplorable "depression. He has indeed much reason to be out of humour "with his *great friends*, and he is a most striking example, that "no author should depend too much on his talents and reputa-"tion. His books, (I shudder while I relate it,) are to be sold "by auction next winter. While I most deeply lament his

Digitized by Google

"destiny, I feel more and more attached to my own system "of privacy and retirement. I feel also a sort of indignation "against this treacherous city, which used him so ungratefully, "and am ready to sing my own song,

"'Take me, ye soft, ye silent joys,
To your retreats again.'

"Elmsley spoke of our friend in so sensible and pleasing a "manner, that I was charmed with him. He has had a letter, "in which Gibbon mentions his expectation of my present, so "that he has certainly received my last letter."

This grievous report, that Gibbon would be reduced to sell a noble collection of books in which he delighted, was soon proved to be false. His self-banishment to Lausanne was generally condemned, and lamented by his friends in England; but the leisure and various advantages which he there enjoyed, for the continuance of his great historical enterprise, and the noble use he made of those advantages, most happily proved the soundness of his own judgment concerning his new plan of life, and the vigour of his indefatigable mind. Although this keen application to his great work hardly allowed him any time for writing letters, he continued to correspond with Hayley, and proofs of their reciprocal regard will occur, even to the end of the historian's earthly existence. The poet felt the absence of his illustrious friend, during his visit to the metropolis in May, when

Digitized by Google

it would have delighted him to enliven Gibbon with a prospect of seeing the two dramas represented, which that friendly critic had most warmly applauded in a private perusal.

In a few days after his dramatic volume appeared, Hayley was agreeably surprised on receiving the following letter from Mr. Colman to his bookseller.

"SOHO-SQUARE, *March* 23, 1784.

"DEAR SIR,

"I have read with much pleasure Mr. Hayley's plays; "and as a theatrical trader, cannot but regret their having lost "the edge of novelty by publication. They should, I think, "have reached the press through the theatre.

"Still, however, I should be glad to bring some of them "before the public in the Haymarket, if not disagreeable to the "author. The two I would select are *Lord Russel* and *The* "*Two Connoisseurs*; to which I give the preference, because I "know my little troop would be equal to the exhibition of them. "*Marcella* could only be sustained by Mrs. Siddons.

"A comedy in rhyme is a bold attempt; yet when so well "executed as in the present instance, it would, I think, be "received with favour, especially on a stage of a genius some-"thing similar to that of a private theatre, for which they were "professedly written.

"Not having the honour of an acquaintance with Mr. Hayley, "I trouble you on this subject, and should be happy if you

Digitized by Google

" could, as soon as convenient, let me know how far my design
" is approved.

" I am, dear Sir,
" Your very faithful
" And most humble Servant,
" G. COLMAN."

A compliment so unexpected from a manager so respectable, both as a gentleman and an author, drew from Hayley the following reply:

" EARTHAM, *March* 25, 1784.

" SIR,

" You have surprised and flattered me in the highest degree
" by your obliging letter to Mr. Cadell, concerning my plays.

" My vanity could not be more highly gratified, than by your
" saying 'they should have reached the press through the
" theatre.' Why they took a shorter but less profitable course,
" (if I have ever the happiness of a personal intimacy with Mr.
" Colman,) I will very frankly inform you; at present, let me
" hasten to express to you my grateful sense of the very polite
" manner, in which you request my permission to confer upon
" me an honour utterly unexpected, uncommon, and flattering in
" itself, and deriving particular value from the hand by which it
" is conferred.

" Had such a proposal been made to me by any ordinary
" manager, I might have been more alarmed than delighted,

Digitized by Google

"from the dread of his mangling my dramatic offspring, for "whom I have all the quick feelings of parental anxiety. In "the present case, I can only feel as a parent, who with a solici-"tude overbalanced by gratitude and exultation, commits his "children to the most honourable patronage—patronage most "liberally offered to them by the father of an accomplished "family, already introduced to the full and just possession of "that public favour, for which these young urchins, thus kindly "patronised, are still to contend.

"There is a chance of my visiting London for a few days, "about the beginning of May; and if I do, I shall certainly take "an opportunity of repeating my thanks to you in person, and "of assuring you that

"I am, Sir,

"With great esteem,

"Your obliged and obedient Servant,

"W. HAYLEY."

"P. S. I fear you will find many speeches in the *Lord Russel*, "too long and heavy for a public stage; but I flatter myself "you will be kind enough to assume the office of your own "*lucidus ordo*.

"'What on the instant should be said, to say,
Things, best reserved at present, to delay;
Guiding the bard through his continued verse,
What to reject, and when; and what rehearse.'

"Forgive me if I misquote your poetry, as I scribble in "extreme haste, to catch the returning post.

"To George Colman, Esq., Soho-square."

Digitized by Google

A dramatic poet of a sanguine spirit, on receiving unexpected overtures of favour and friendship, from a liberal manager of deserved reputation, might probably suppose, that new fields of honour and emolument were soon to open before him. If Hayley indulged his fancy in any splendid visions of this nature, they certainly were not realized in the article of profit. Happily for himself, he could truly say with the Henry of Shakspeare, "By Jove, I am not covetous of gold."

The public exhibition of his plays did not put a single guinea into his purse, but the praise bestowed on them afforded him much lively gratification. In a letter of May the 22d, the author said,

"I have seen Messrs. Cadell and Colman to-day. The inter-
"view with both was pleasing; but I must defer minute
"particulars till I return. Our plays are not yet in rehearsal;
"and cannot, I suppose, be performed this month: but Colman
"seems much inclined to shew them all the favour in his power;
"and Cadell tells me he hopes to have sold all the first edition
"in two months. He reckons Dodsley's demand very judaical;
"but we are to have a consultation with the gentle Hughes (a
"friend of Dodsley's) on Tuesday. Colman has civilly invited
"me to meet my old friend, Mr. Garnier, at his house; a singu-
"lar incident, that the man who carried my first dramatic child
"to its grave in Garrick's parlour, should accidentally celebrate
"the approaching theatrical birthday of this luckier bantling."

On the 28th May, he despatched to Eartham the following account of his final treaty with Dodsley.

Digitized by Google

"I am the more eager to address you, from having very "agreeable tidings to communicate. This morning has made "me again the lord and sovereign master of my own literary "children. The gentle Hughes could bring the untractable "Dodsley into no terms of arbitration. I therefore requested "my honest old blunt friend, Tom Payne (of the Mews Gate,) to "make one effort in my favour, and prevail on the sullen animal "to accept 500*l.* instead of his exorbitant demand. Tom spoke "with his usual frankness to his reluctant brother, and happily "succeeded. They shook hands on the bargain, and I trust a "few days will complete the business. I received this pleasant "information within these two hours. I have also heard to-day "that Mason is in town, and has expressed a very eager desire "to see me, and a design of calling here."

Hayley had the pleasure of receiving this intended visit from the eminent poet, for whose talents he had publicly expressed very high and sincere esteem. He was, however, grieved to observe, that this celebrated veteran of Parnassus seemed much impaired in health, by years and worldly vexations; and in conversing upon life and literature, he shewed many signs of his having suffered his own enjoyments to be sadly over-clouded by ebullitions of a spleenful spirit. The conference excited in Hayley more pity than admiration, but the two poets parted with many expressions of reciprocal regard.

While Hayley was announcing to his Eliza the preparations in London, for exhibiting his tragedy of *Lord Russel*, she had the high gratification of seeing that tragedy represented in the

Digitized by Google

native city of her husband, by a very decent company of provincial players. This pathetic drama seems to have been generally admired. The author thus speaks of it, in a letter of May 20, 1784:

"Romney says, the Bishop of Salisbury and his lady have "been saying very fine things to him in praise of our *Lord* "*Russel*, this morning; so I hope he will prosper, with an "episcopal sanction."

In the course of the following spring, the poet and his Eliza had the pleasure of seeing both *Lord Russel* and the comedy of *The Two Connoisseurs* excellently acted by Mr. Colman's company in the Haymarket.

Palmer, who from the humble station of a door-keeper to the pit, had raised himself to the rank of a principal actor, performed the part of Lord Russel, with great feeling and dignity; and that humorous comedian, Mr. Parsons, in the character of Varnish, by his drollery in displaying and puffing the historical picture of Joseph, set the audience in a roar of laughter. The comedy was excellently supported in all its characters; and that much kind attention was paid to its decoration, will appear from the following passage in a letter from Mr. Flaxman, the sculptor, to his friend of Eartham.

"Mr. Colman applied to me by the recommendation of Mr. "Rooker, his painter, to model a large group of Alcestes and "Admetus, to appear in your comedy of *The Connoisseurs*. It "was however considered, that it would be very cumbersome on "the stage; and liable to total demolition, from the jostling of

Digitized by Google

" scenes, and the handling of ignorant persons. It was there-
" fore determined to place living figures clothed in white drapery
" in its stead. I offered my service to Mr. Colman, to set the
" figures and place the draperies, which he civilly received, but
" I fear he will neglect, from an apprehension that I might
" make some charge for my time. But believe me, I am too
" much concerned in the success of any thing belonging to you,
" to have any such views. I would make a design, set the
" figures, and attend the theatre at any time, without making any
" charge; and I think it an object of consequence, to have the
" figures set by a sculptor, who has admired the antiques, for if
" it is left to the dancers, I have no doubt but they will make a
" scaramouch caricature of it."

Here is an early proof of that liberal and benevolent spirit, which has invariably distinguished this illustrious artist, in his progress from his first studies in art, to that high degree of excellence and honour, which by the rare union of first-rate talents and equal virtues, he has happily attained. The year 1784 seems to have laid the foundation of that sincere and lasting friendship, which was ever supported with reciprocal kindness, between the sculptor and the poet. Hayley, in observing that his books were suffering from the damp of a ground-floor, had been tempted in the year 1780, to enlarge his house by the addition of a capacious library, built over an arcade: and this year he engaged the genius of Flaxman in fitting up this new and delightful apartment, a room of thirty feet by twenty-four, completely filled with books and decorated

Digitized by Google

with the sculpture of Flaxman, and the painting of Romney! In that season, the master of that beautiful villa esteemed the society of these two friendly artists among the prime enjoyments of his favourite scene; and Flaxman, in returning from it to London, said in a letter to his host, of this year, "I had the happiness of "living such a fortnight at Eartham, as many thousands of "my fellow-creatures go out of the world without enjoying." The fortnight so pleasing to all parties was passed in September, when the sculptor not only superintended the affixing of the sculptural ornaments of the new library, but modelled busts of his two equally zealous friends, the poet and the painter. Romney had been his first encourager in art; and had now much cordial delight in witnessing the highly promising cultivation and advancement of those talents, concerning which his friendly spirit had predicted all that could animate and satisfy the most laudable ambition.

The guests that Hayley had the pleasure of receiving at Eartham, this year, 1784, made the summer and autumn peculiarly pleasing; for before the arrival of the two favourite artists just mentioned, the pleasant friendly critic of Winchester, Dr. Wharton, and his frequent associate, Mr. Sadleir, of Southampton, came together from Hampshire, to devote as many days as they could spare to the literary recluse of Eartham. Hayley, whose health had suffered from intense application to his poetical studies, and from various sources of vexation, had at this time begun a copious work of sportive benevolence in prose; in pursuing which, at his leisure, he hoped to keep his mind free from all

Digitized by Google

perilous mental exertion. This work he imparted in its commencement, to his visitors Warton and Sadleir. The sprightly scholar of Winton was particularly charmed with the plan, and such specimens of the performance as the author had already composed. The work, in which he was now advancing, afforded much seasonable amusement to the writer when confined by illness, and swelling by degrees into three volumes, proved the celebrated *Essay on Old Maids.* Dr. Warton suggested the lively idea of introducing an antediluvian old maid. That gay and friendly divine was highly pleased with the alacrity with which the author seized his suggestion, and with the little antediluvian story that he conceived and executed from the Doctor's idea. Never was a book projected and written with more guileless or more benevolent intentions, yet a host of prudes and hypocrites railed against it, as immoral and irreligious; but of its enemies and its friends, we may have occasion to speak again, when we arrive at the season of its publication, in a future year. This account of 1784, may close with two remarkable incidents, and some letters relating to them. The first is a termination of the long intimacy and correspondence between Hayley and Steevens, the Editor of Shakspeare; an intimacy which had afforded to the poet of Eartham much lively delight, from the brilliant talents and fascinating manners of his volatile friend; and much cordial concern, from a progressive insight into the astonishing foibles, by which those admirable talents were deplorably degraded, and deprived of their native lustre and proper effect.

Digitized by Google

These foibles were all the offspring of vanity, so strange and so fantastic, that it seemed almost to border on absolute insanity. It happened, that Steevens, who was singularly vehement in liking and disliking, had conceived a furious prejudice against the pre-eminent actress, Mrs. Siddons, and hoped to mortify her by magnifying the theatrical talents of her sister, to whom he paid incessant attention. This induced him to write the following letter to Hayley :

"HAMPSTEAD HEATH, *July* 27th, 1784.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"You have it in your power at once to confer a great favour "on me, and do eminent service to a good and lovely girl. Your "*Lord Russel* appears in the course of next week, at the "Haymarket. Miss Kemble, who has succeeded beyond the "expectations of her warmest friends, in the very delicate part "of *Harriet*, in *The Guardian*, is to personate your *Lady* "*Margaret;* and I will venture to promise, she shall execute all "you could desire within the compass of so small a character. "If her natural timidity could once be overcome, she would "make a distinguished figure in her profession, as her mind is "every way stronger and more cultivated than that of her sister. "Her diffidence in herself is her chief enemy; and I know not "how it can be dislodged, but by praise, when she has deserved "it. If therefore, you, whose approbation is fame, would "bestow a dozen lines on her performance of *Margaret*, you will "be guilty only of an honest stratagem to procure her that "confidence in her own abilities, which I am certain will operate

Digitized by Google

" to her future advantage. You know what you should hope to " find in the representative of old Bedford's daughter, and no " one can describe it half so well. If you will oblige me with a " few verses, which I may send to her in your name and in your " hand-writing, the day after she has trod in your buskins, you " will, as I observed before, prove the best friend she ever met " with. You are one of the few people whom one can venture " to solicit in the cause of an honest woman. You have my " assurance, that your lines shall not be printed without your " immediate permission. I shall persuade her you came up " *incog*, to see your own play, returned into the country next " morning, and not knowing her address, intrusted me with the " delivery of your compliment. I shall attend every represen- " tation of your play, and will transmit you a faithful account " of its success, which I do not doubt of. Your *Lady Russel*, " though patronised by a number of clamorous friends, will " prove only a piece of beautiful imbecility. I saw her " *Sigismunda* twice; her voice is hardly audible, and her face, " though handsome, exhibits no variety of expression.

" If I can prevail on you to oblige me, let me beg you will " write the lines on a separate sheet of paper, and enclose them " in your letter. I shall pay with cheerfulness for a packet of a " pound weight on such an occasion. With my best compli- " ments to the fair Eliza, whom I entreat to back my petition,

" I remain,

" Your ever faithful and affectionate

" G. STREVENS.

Digitized by Google

"P. S.—On second thoughts, if you will allow the verses "to go into the *St. James's Chronicle*, after they have been "presented to the lady, you will do her cause more extensive "service. But without your leave they shall be circulated only "among her friends, in manuscript. I am sure she will be more "flattered by your notice, than by any present that could be "made her.

"I hear you have re-purchased all your works from Dodsley; "a circumstance I much rejoice in. Is it true? If it is, we "may expect, I hope, a handsome edition. Pray let me know "how the *Lord Russel* went off at Chichester. I fear the "Collins's did little justice to it. I have discharged *Hernandez* "with better success than I expected; and most heartily wish "our *Marcella* was to be your *Rachel*. I never heard a line so "forcibly spoken as she spoke one of yours:

"'And all the blazing ruin rushes on thee.'

Adieu.

"My best wishes to Nurse; she will see I have not for-"gotten an old friend, though I am soliciting for a new "one."

Whether the writer of this very singular letter intended only to gratify the young actress he patronised, or had an insidious design of drawing the dramatic author into a situation that might render him ridiculous, Hayley could never perfectly ascertain: but several hints which he had lately received of the critic's envious disposition, induced him to consider the strange

Digitized by Google

request as a snare, which it became him to elude with civility and good humour. He, therefore, returned the following reply, and Steevens wrote to him no more.

"EARTHAM, July, 1704.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"I can hardly believe you serious in your request. If you "are so, your diffidence in yourself is certainly equal to that of "the lady you patronise; and you must allow me to correct it. "Can you really, with a grave countenance, desire me to praise "an actress, of whose merit I probably cannot be a spectator, "when you yourself have not only the advantage of studying "all her excellence, but the highest powers of describing it in "poetry, animated by personal regard. My friend Romney "might as well write to a Venetian painter, and request from "him an ideal portrait of a lady in London, who is only within "the reach of his own excellent pencil.

"As I am convinced that the talents of Miss Kemble must "have received infinite improvement from your critical instruc-"tions, I am willing to do her the justice of believing, that no "poetical praise could animate her so highly as that which flows "from your pen. Were she not contented with this, she could "but ill deserve the panegyric of any other encomiast.

"So much for the lady! whom I will hope to thank in person "hereafter, for the graces, that I doubt not, she will give to the "short character in my tragedy, which she condescends to "represent.

Digitized by Google

"As to myself, I might at present very fairly plead an utter "inability to compose such a compliment as you desire; for I "happen to be surrounded with carpenters, whose hammers stun "me from five in the morning till eight at night, being eagerly "engaged in fitting up a new library. I might also remind you "that my compliance with your request, were it possible, might "throw me into a condition truly ridiculous; as you will allow, "if you recollect the following squib, composed by a nameless "wag, upon a luckless dramatic author of the last age:

"'Let Poets who would watch the time
To say smart things in civil rhyme,
Consider, that beneath the moon
'Tis dangerous to praise too soon.
A sanguine poet t'other day,
Who had composed a serious play,
Hoping to see with heart contented,
His scenes divinely represented,
In one of those exulting fits,
That seize on fame-foreseeing wits,
Finished a fine elaborate ode,
In which he prematurely showed
With what refined consummate art
Fair Oldfield played the favourite part:
The compliment was well invented;
And fairly penned, to be presented;
While the vain author, free from fears,
Had plaudits echoing in his ears:
But chance, who loves with bards to quarrel,
And to a nettle, turn their laurel,

Digitized by Google

Contrived to spoil this bard's design,
For ere his heroine spoke a line,
Tho' with his friends the house was crammed,
His play unluckily was damned.'

"I am sorry to hear you speak of the new actress, in terms "so unpromising; but I have the comfort of knowing, that the "gentleness of *Lady Russel*, does not demand any vehement "animation. As the play and the principal actress are both of "so quiet a character, I ought perhaps to wish you a good nap "through the two last acts of the performance. I shall, however, "be obliged to you for the account you kindly offer to send "me; and I trust I am philosopher enough to support with "composure any fate that may befal the production.

"Adieu! Let me exhort you to set a juster value on your "own poetical talents, and believe me

"Very faithfully yours,

"W. HAYLEY.

"P. S. Eliza is escaped to Chichester, from the noise, dust, "and confusion of our little castle, which is an absolute chaos "at present, as both the old library and the new one are in "the hands of workmen. Nurse, who is a Hebe of threescore, "returns your kind salutation. Adieu.

"To George Steevens, Esq., Hampstead."

So ended a correspondence which had been supported for several years, with much serious and much playful spirit. Hayley never sought to renew his intercourse with this precarious friend;

Digitized by Google

but continued to manifest an indelible regard for his talents, first by recommending it to Alderman Boydell, to solicit his aid as the editor of his projected magnificent Shakspeare; and lastly, by composing an epitaph for his monument.

Hayley had at this time a double source of regret, in the alienation of an admired friend, and the death of a near and long regarded relation; indeed the nearest relation he had on the side of his father.

The person alluded to was the Rev. John Hayley, whom the poet had once visited, at his living of Scotton, in Lincolnshire, and to whom he had addressed various affectionate effusions of occasional verses; the principal of which was an epistle describing his own feelings and occupations, at Lyme, in Dorsetshire, during the summer of 1773.

This John Hayley was born to the prospect of an immense fortune; but his father, who had decorated the villa at Erith, on the banks of the Thames, which was afterwards sold to Sir Sampson Gideon, had so perilous a propensity to lavish expense, that his only son inherited little or nothing of his dissipated wealth: but happily proved a worthy man of God, with a cultivated and cheerful spirit, contented with very moderate preferment. He had ever highly admired the mother of his cousin, the poet, and with him he continued a most friendly correspondence, till he became much enfeebled by those infirmities of age, which terminated in death. The poet sent tidings of this event to his Eliza, on a visit of some days in Chichester; and the letter displays so much of a philosophical spirit, on the

Digitized by Google

article of fortune, that it seems to deserve a place in this Memoir.

It opens with a little interesting anecdote of the celebrated Charlotte Smith, who, in the spring of this year, had honoured the poet of Eartham, by inscribing to him the first edition of her admirable sonnets.

"EARTHAM, *September* 29, 1784.

"MY DEAR ELIZA,

"My little companion returned very safe, and has been "spouting Shakspeare with great energy this morning. In "return for the history you promise me, I have much to inform "you of; so much, that my scrawl, perhaps, may swell into two "sheets. First let me say, did you hear yesterday, that a post-"chaise was sent for to convey a lady, suddenly taken ill at "Eartham, to her own home? So it was; and this sick lady was "no less a personage, than the elegant poetess of Bignor Park. "About one o'clock, I was surprised by an exclamation from "Nurse, 'Lord, sir! there are three strange ladies in the garden.' "—'Find out who they are.' My ambassadress, however, did "not return, but bustled about the poor invalid; and when "I descended to make farther inquiries, I found the veteran "Charlotte Collins, with Mrs. Smith and her daughter, in a "piteous plight, in the parlour.

"Our tender sister of Parnassus had been seized with spasms "in her stomach, which had obliged her to quit her horse, and "creep, like a poor wounded bird, through the garden.

Digitized by Google

"I played the physician with some success; and by a season-
"able medicine soon restored the sick Muse. The chaise had
"been ordered in their first alarm, and as it could not arrive
"till between four and five, I insisted on their taking a poetical
"dinner, to which they consented after many apologies.

"The fair invalid was sufficiently restored to survey all our
"walks, and the chaise arriving, they departed between five
"and six.

"So much for my first history! I have now a second to tell
"you. The post of last night brought me a letter from Gains-
"borough, written by a clergyman, many years the curate of my
"cousin, who is (as I began to imagine,) no more. Do not, my
"dear Eliza, be chagrined, when I tell you that my very amiable
"though whimsical relation seems not even to have mentioned
"my name in his Will.

"I confess to you that I felt for a moment surprised and
"mortified, that his affection had not led him to honour my
"name with some endearing though trivial bequest; a single
"book from his library, or the picture of our comely great uncle.
"But on reflection, I feel this circumstance has rather given
"vigour than depression to my mind. It teaches me, I must
"expect nothing from any mortal; but by the most spirited
"exertion of my own talents, be the entire architect of my
"own fortune. I feel no disappointment in regard to money,
"because I luckily believed my cousin so far from possessing
"*thousands*, that I did not suppose he had even hundreds to
"bequeath; but I own I was *vain* enough to suppose from his

Digitized by Google

" general language towards me, that he loved me as his own
" child.

" Perhaps he did so, and *cela suffit pour le cœur*. As he
" possessed great integrity of mind, he certainly disposed of his
" property according to his own ideas of justice, and *cela suffit*
" *pour son ame*. Upon this state of the account I feel myself
" in perfect charity, both with his heart and his soul: so
" peace to his ashes! As to my own private interest, I am inclined
" to think it much for the best, that I have not been surprised by
" an unexpected legacy of two or three thousand pounds, which
" might, in all probability, have led me to many extravagancies.
" The not receiving it may improve me in the study of frugality,
" more truly valuable to a poet than the most liberal bequest.

" Thus you see I fairly prove myself a gainer by my loss,
" if that can be reckoned lost which was never possessed or
" expected.

" The world, I hope, will be a gainer too, for had these
" same thousands fallen to me, I might perhaps have thrown
" away my pen, and what cause might the public not have had
" to regret the enrichment of a poor author, who meditates the
" production of such mighty works! But I will endeavour to
" make you smile no longer, and more soberly and seriously
" proceed to tell you, that I have answered the letter announcing
" the decease of my relation, and mentioned his promise of
" directing his executors to send all our manuscripts to you,
" and desired if any such are found, that they may be sent to the
" care of Mr. Long, in Chancery-Lane. I have scribbled till my

Digitized by Google

" eyes cry for quarter, so you will readily allow me to close this
" long scrawl with my benediction. God bless you. Be cheerful,
" Kate, and believe me your poetical, philosophical, and affec-
" tionate H.

" P. S. Sadleir has kindly sent me a delightful cargo of *rare*
" *books*, from St. André's library."

This letter spoke the genuine sentiments of the writer, who displayed, in the various seasons of his life, a generous contempt of money, which often rose to romantic excess, and sometimes led him into serious inconvenience. But in his estimation, books, retirement, and friendship, were the real treasures of human life. In all these he was abundantly rich; and he justly reckoned his quick and constant relish for them all, a blessing in itself, that called for incessant and cheerful gratitude to the Giver of all good.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER III.

SERIOUS ILLNESS, IN 1785, AND VARIOUS COMPOSITIONS AND OCCURRENCES OF THAT YEAR.

In 1785, Hayley was in imminent danger of being destroyed; first, by a sudden accident, and afterwards by lingering pain which that accident occasioned. When his eyes were in a state so tender that he could not ride in the open air without suffering fresh inflammation, he was tempted to build a riding-house in his villa of Eartham. He was always extremely fond of horses, and his generous friend, Captain Conway, had given him a horse of extraordinary stature, and singularly good-tempered. The good temper of this memorable animal saved the life of the poet; for it happened that the ground of his riding-house became slippery, in being watered too copiously to lay the dust, and in a hasty turn the lofty steed slipped down with a leg of his rider under him. When the horse arose, a bruise rendered Hayley unable to extricate his foot from the stirrup; and he was dragged almost the whole length of the building, (100 feet,) in a situation to be kicked to death, if his horse had felt any propensity to kick; but the astonishing gentleness of the high-spirited animal, on this occasion, gradually disengaged the embarrassed foot of his master, who, limping, regained his dwelling-house,

Digitized by Google

and cheerfully thought he should very soon remove all traces of the accident, But his frame had sustained more mischief than he was at first aware of. The ligaments of the hip joint had probably been much injured. Yet as there appeared no external bruise in that part, Hayley neglected the symptoms of uneasiness that he felt, and supposed them to arise from a transient rheumatism. It chanced, however, that his amiable friend Dr. Bailey, the physician, of Chichester, in paying him a fortuitous visit, reproved him for neglecting what might lead to most serious consequences, and sent their common friend, Mr. Guy, the surgeon, to examine the state of the suffering limb. In perceiving an unexpected swelling round the hip, Guy tenderly informed his patient, that if he did not immediately confine himself to his bed for a month or six weeks, he would certainly incur the danger of dying in torture. "I hope I should not be unwilling to meet a placid death (replied the poet), but I have a sincere desire to escape the torture with which you threaten me. I will therefore pitch a tent bed in this large library, and pursue my present literary occupation on the pillow for a month or two, according to your friendly injunction." The bed was accordingly prepared, and the patient author, with his usual gaiety of spirit, employed himself daily in teaching the learned languages to his son, and in writing new chapters of that fanciful and benevolent essay, in which it was his sincere intention to prove himself the friend of old maids. After passing many weeks in a recumbent posture, he found the injured limb rather worse than better; he could not walk without the aid of crutches, and

Digitized by Google

he was pressed by his kind medical friends, Guy and Long, to visit London, towards the end of May, for the opinion of the two celebrated medical men, John Hunter and Dr. Warren. He passed a fortnight in the metropolis, and visiting the theatre, like Foote's devil, upon two sticks, he had the gratification of seeing his Tragedy of *Lord Russel*, and his Comedy of *The Two Connoisseurs*, exceedingly well played by the company of Coleman, in the Haymarket. On his return to his favourite retirement, he pursued the medical directions that he obtained in London with considerable success, as we learn from the following cheerful commencement of a letter to his friend of Southampton.

August 8, 1785.

"My dear Sadleir,

"After passing five weeks in bed, and hopping upon "crutches for many more, I begin to appear erect again, and am "still a man at your worship's service, though not according to "Aristotle's definition, as I move upon three legs instead of two. "In spite of all these infirmities, I have made some advances "with my old virgins; but what these advances may be you "shall not know, till your worship comes to take another peep at "the said honest old virgins, who, by the way, were very quiet "and pleasant bedfellows in the season of my confinement."

The letter closes with a lively and pressing invitation, both to Mr. Sadleir and his intimate friend Dr. Warton, to revisit Eartham together. Of the many highly estimable friends whom Hayley

Digitized by Google

had opportunities of attaching to himself in the course of a long life, Mr. Sadleir was the individual with whom he enjoyed the longest intimacy. That sprightly and benevolent personage, whom in his latter days the poet used to call his patriarch of Southampton, had treated his guest of Sussex with paternal kindness and partiality when he was a boy of thirteen, and continued to shew the same tender and animated delight in his society when that boy had passed his grand climacteric, and the patriarch was still enjoying the rare green old age of eighty-seven. The perfect openness of heart with which Hayley unveiled to this confidential friend the bitterest affliction of his life, will appear in two letters of the following year 1786. We may conclude this account of its predecessor, by observing, that in December, 1785, he published, but without a name, the singular book in which his friends Sadleir and Warton had taken a lively interest, the popular though calumniated *Essay on Old Maids*, in three volumes. The benevolent intentions of the author in this work, and the strange misconstruction and hostility which it experienced, are temperately displayed in a new preface to a third edition; whence the writer had removed several passages that appeared to himself like learned lumber, in the place of which he substituted new matter of a more interesting nature.

Conscious of his pure intentions in composing the essay, he only smiled at the mistake of those rigid ladies who reviled the production as indecent and irreligious; and he exulted in the

Digitized by Google

warm applause of several most accomplished and candid members of the sisterhood, who regarded and extolled it as an elegant and moral performance, that truly deserved, not the censure, but the thanks and the esteem of their society.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER IV.

OF UNSUCCESSFUL ENDEAVOURS TO COUNTERACT THE CALAMITOUS PRESSURE OF CONNUBIAL INFELICITY.—THE VARIOUS OCCURRENCES OF 1786.

The year 1786 was in its commencement peculiarly unfavourable to the domestic peace and literary pursuits of Hayley.

While he retained his health, and the native cheerfulness of his spirit, a lively imagination afforded him the best possible antidote for the marvellous mental infelicities of his pitiable Eliza When he could no longer divert her volatile mind with lively sallies of fancy, she considered Eartham as a dungeon; and from motives of pity and tenderness, he conveyed her, in the beginning of February, to the house of their most intimate friend, Mrs. Nicholas, in Argyle-street. This lady, the sister of Mr. Mundy the poet, who has immortalized his own name, by his two excellent compositions on Needwood Forest, had been long a favourite of the Hayleys; and at present, with the most tender and generous friendship, endeavoured to promote an amicable plan of separation, between Hayley aud his unhappy Eliza, which friendship considered as absolutely necessary to preserve the life of a husband, whose destiny had involved him in scenes of anguish and affliction, with which no human powers appeared

Digitized by Google

strong enough incessantly to contend. By the mediation of tender friends, the painful business of separation appeared to be completely adjusted. Hayley, who during his anxious visit to London, resided under the roof of his friend Romney, returned to his favourite retirement, in the happy persuasion, that he had settled the best possible plan for the mental tranquillity and amusement of his pitiable Eliza. She was to fix her residence at Derby, under the kind protection of that friendly physician, Dr. Beridge, who had generously undertaken this painful and delicate charge; but Hayley had hardly passed ten days in the sweet serenity of Eartham, when in just regard for his friend Beridge, he felt it incumbent on himself to hasten again to London, and resume the burthen, by which he had so lately found himself overwhelmed. As a brief yet clear account of these distressing occurrences is found in a letter of Hayley to his confidential friend of Southampton, written in the following August, it is thought a transcript of that letter will best elucidate the feelings and the conduct of Hayley, on that trying occasion. The letter opens with a benevolent endeavour to mitigate the resentment of Mr. Sadleir against a favourite female relation, who had offended her family by a precipitate marriage.

To Richard Vernon Sadleir, Esq.

"August, 1786.

"My very dear Sadleir,

"Believe me, my heart is of a retentive mould, where the "kind affections are concerned. Your very long silence had not

Digitized by Google

" impaired my regard for you, and the sight of your hand-writing " gave me infinite pleasure. Let me hasten to express the " great satisfaction which I feel in the prospect (which I trust " I may confide in) of your being in due process of time, fully " and affectionately reconciled to your unfortunate relation. " The cruel injury she has sustained from the testamentary " resentment of her father, will, I know, be the best advocate " for her in your generous mind. I say *cruel injury*, because " I really think no parent has a right to strip a creature, that " he has moulded of combustible passions, and introduced into " a treacherous world, merely for having offended his pride by " one act of impassioned indiscretion; for as to guilt, you have " yourself acquitted her of the charge. Be kind to her, my " dear friend; and do not vainly suppose such kindness can be " inconsistent with your dignity, for as an eloquent philosopher " told us long ago, and as our Saviour more effectually shewed " us by his example, the truest dignity of an intellectual being, " consists in pardoning those who offend.

" You will think me turned into a *solemn preacher*, alas! I " have not only that right to preach to you, which strong " affection gives to an old friend, but *that* also, which arises from " having suffered *afflictions* much heavier than those you have so " feelingly lamented. Yes, my dear Sadleir, could you see every " suffering of my soul, since I wrote to you last, you would candidly " confess all your own troubles in life very tolerable indeed, when " compared to mine. You are no stranger to the apprehensions " that my dear departed mother entertained, concerning my poor

Digitized by Google

"Eliza. Those apprehensions have, in part, taken effect. "Though she is not, and perhaps never may, fall into absolute "insanity, yet, as a sensible and good old female friend of hers "observed to me the other day, the state of mind, to which she "has long been subject, is to all who tenderly regard her, an "evil much more distressing than madness itself; it is a state "not easily described. At times suspicion and pride, (the "two frequent forerunners of absolute insanity,) appear its "chief characteristics; at other times, depression and melan-"choly. This severest of human distresses so severely afflicted "my shattered health, that by the advice of some friends, I "attempted, in February last, to obtain a little respite, and "relief to myself, by removing my dear though half-crazed "companion, to Derby, under the eye of my excellent medical "friend Beridge. I thought I had adjusted this difficult and "torturing business. I had left her in London and returned to "Eartham, when I was surprised by a letter, to say that my "excellent friend of Derby (whose health also has been much "shaken) found the idea of the important charge too heavy for "himself and his tender-minded wife. I set off at three o'clock "in the morning, through a deep snow, to save poor Eliza the "shock of hearing this disappointment from any other quarter, "and brought her tolerably composed to Eartham. Since that "time, finding my condition such that no *human friend* could "relieve me, I have sought relief only from Heaven; and with "tears of religious gratitude I can say, that in my own troubled "mind, and shattered health, I have not sought it in vain. My

Digitized by Google

" only aim is to keep her as quiet and contented as possible, " in this lovely retirement.

" My solitude is the less grievous to me, as my income is " very narrow, and since my late agitation of spirits, I have been " utterly unable to engage in any literary works that might " promise future profit.

" I endeavour, however, to grow more and more of a philo- " sopher every day; and in time, perhaps, I may be able to " scribble again to some useful purpose. I have given you this " secret melancholy history '*ex amoris abundantiâ erga te*,' as " you may have heard various rumours concerning me, which " this will explain. Keep it in your own bosom. You need not " say a syllable in reply *to this point*, as I know with what " sincerity you will pity and regard.

" Your sincere and affectionate,

" W. HAYLEY."

Much as his incurable domestic affliction preyed upon his health, it did not render the poet of Eartham inattentive to the concerns of literature; or extinguish his fervent desire to obtain new distinction in those fields of honour, which afforded the most agreeable exercise to his active mind. His troubles, however, precluded him from printing any new composition in the year of which we are speaking, except an Ode, which he sent without his name to Maty's Review. The design of it was to animate and encourage Mr. Bruce, the Abyssinian traveller, to disregard the many scurrilous attempts to prejudice the mind of the

Digitized by Google

public against his veracity. The first stanza contained the following incentive to an immediate publication of his travels.

> Hear truth invite! hear science plead!
> Bold traveller, their voice attend!
> Eager to give thee honour's meed.
> And hail thee as their public friend.
> Adventurous Bruce, allow their claim!
> And, since thy toils at genuine glory aim,
> Let thy accomplished hand consign those toils to fame.

Hayley often blamed himself for not having imparted his name to the interesting personage whom he addressed in terms so friendly, and especially when he found that Mr. Bruce spoke so very politely of this Ode, in the introduction to his Travels, and said that it had been ascribed to Mason.

In October, Hayley was induced by many important motives, to pass a month with his friend Romney in London, leaving his Eliza in Sussex. His almost daily letters to her, during his absence, display his incessant solicitude for the tranquillity and amusement of her mind; and contain much information concerning the variety of business that engaged him in town. In the close of the year, he sent to cheer his compassionate friend of Southampton, the following account of his excursion, and its favourable effects.

To R. V. Sadleir, Esq.

"My dear Sadleir, "December, 1786.

"It gave me great pleasure, to find on my return to "London, a cheerful epistle from you, with a good account "both of yourself and your fellow-traveller. May you continue

Digitized by Google

" to travel comfortably together, and without any kind of annoy
" ance, through all the important stages of the important journey
" of life.

" It will please you to hear, that I have been a great gainer
" in health and spirits, (which are the only genuine riches in my
" estimation,) by my late excursion to town. After suffering
" more than a long year of the most wretched ill health, in
" which my body and my mind, like a couple of quarrelsome
" cripples, were continually increasing the malady of each other,
" I seem to be in a fair way of recovering those corporeal and
" mental faculties, which had almost deserted me, at a time
" when I had most need of their assistance, to enable me to meet
" without shrinking the most terrific of all domestic calamities,
" in the mental disorder of my poor Eliza. Thank Heaven, I
" am miraculously restored. The passing a few weeks among a
" set of the most intelligent and affectionate friends, who per-
" fectly comprehend and who are most kindly solicitous to
" lighten my distress, has proved the best of medicines, both to
" body and mind. I have so far recovered my limb, that I can
" walk a mile without pain; and what is a still greater blessing
" to me, I begin to feel that my imagination has ceased also to
" be a cripple. Although, at present, I have no new important
" works to produce, I can entertain the hope that such talents
" as I possessed are not utterly destroyed. Their exertion,
" however, must greatly depend on the state of my dear unhappy
" companion, whose mind being neither perfectly sound nor per-
" fectly insane, is subject to more variations than the weather.

Digitized by Google

"She was very good in my absence, and complied with my "request of her remaining entirely at home: indeed my plan "must ever be, to keep her as much under our own roof as "possible, and contrive, at the same time, all the quiet amuse-"ments that I can devise for her. But this, alas! is no easy "task; and most of the friends, who have at times assisted me "in it, are obliged to shrink from an office so oppressive. I "trust, therefore, chiefly in the aid of Heaven, and feel the "advantage of expecting it only from the Almighty. But some-"what too much of this; your humanity will pardon me for "dwelling on such a topic. Let me turn to more cheerful "subjects. Have you observed the noble project now in agita-"tion, for the honour of Shakspeare, and the encouragement of "historical painting? I had the pleasure of being a little instru-"mental in setting this noble idea afloat. But it is to our dear "Romney, that England is chiefly indebted for a scheme that "promises, I think, to reflect great honour on our country. I will "tell you all the private history of the project's formation, when "I have the pleasure of seeing you. I have scarce left myself "room to say, that I am sending the rare books from the library "of St. André home to you again with many thanks. Accept "our best wishes, and believe me

"Ever your affectionate,

"W. H."

Hayley has related more at large, in his life of Romney, the liberal zeal that his friend displayed in the memorable

Digitized by Google

business of the Shakspeare gallery; a subject that engaged the thoughts of the two friends not a little, while Hayley continued his visit of this year to his favourite painter. It was at the same time, and under Romney's roof, that another friendly artist, very dear to the poet of Eartham, exerted his benevolent spirit in trying to raise a considerable supply for the purse of the Sussex author.

The active and ardent Meyer had been engaged in a private mission to Germany, to adjust a point of much domestic importance to the Lady of the eminent Warren Hastings. On his return, he brought a popular German opera, with all its music in manuscript; and imagined, in the sanguine benevolence of his heart, that it might be made to produce emolument amounting to little less than a thousand pounds, for the too much exhausted exchequer of his friend Hayley. He, therefore, was most kindly assiduous in attending the poet during his visit in Cavendish-Square, to assist in translating the favourite Opera; as Hayley at that time had but very little knowledge of the German. The friendly spirit, and the lively hopes, with which this singular undertaking was conducted, are displayed in the following passage of a letter from Hayley to his Eliza.

"CAVENDISH-SQUARE, *November* 23, 1786.

"To avoid the embarrassment of very soon revisiting the "metropolis, I have determined to remain here till about the "middle, or perhaps the end, of next week; but I have given out "to all my acquaintance, except the cabinet council above men-

Digitized by Google

" tioned, (consisting of Meyer, Clyfford, Longinus, and Romney,)
" that I think of quitting London to-morrow. Clyfford and Meyer,
" are both so good as to devote some hours of every day to
" our business in this house. To let you into the whole mystery,
" our labour arises from the difficulty, not only of translating
" German into English verse, but at the same time fitting the
" English words to some admirable German music; for *entre nous*,
" we are preparing one of the prettiest musical dramas, that I
" ever saw. Meyer obtained the manuscript music, from the
" Court of Wirtemburg, when he was last in Germany; and
" when we have completed the whole necessary business, he
" means to sell the complete opera, without mentioning any
" name, to his friend Harris the manager, who is very eager to
" have it; we shall stipulate, however, to have the price increased,
" if the success is great, and we are all most sanguine in our
" ideas of it.

" At all events it is pleasant work, as my friends co-operate
" with me, with as much zeal as I ever felt in my life in the
" service of any friend. Meyer brings with him an old faithful
" musical confidant, who taught his wife music in her young
" days. This musician and Clyfford's voice afford us all the
" musical aid we want for the adjustment of the songs: as this
" is a grand literary secret, you will keep it to yourself."

Hayley returned to Eartham before the last day of November. The result of the friendly and harmonious labour, so cheerfully recorded in his letter, will be seen in our account of subsequent

Digitized by Google

years. During this residence of some weeks in London, he had the cordial gratification of seeing various friends peculiarly anxious to alleviate his domestic calamity, and to improve his finances. The learned and benevolent Dr. Kippis offered him most liberal terms, if he chose to engage as his co-adjutor, in the arduous work of the folio *Biographia Britannica.* Hayley wrote, at the desire of this amiable veteran of literature, a life of Crashaw the poet; but observing how inadequate the emolument of Dr. Kippis himself appeared to the labour he bestowed on that national book, Hayley made him a present of the life, which he had written at the Doctor's request; and which is inserted in his unfinished edition of the Biographia. In closing this account of 1786, we may observe, it was a year of much anxiety, and of many gratifications, to the poet of Eartham. One of his most cordial gratifications we have still to mention. It arose from his being this year enabled to make a decent provision for his invaluable Nurse; (who had passed more than fifty years in his family, when he recorded her merits on her tomb-stone, in 1792.) In selling, this year (1786) to a friend, the house in Chichester, in which his parents had resided, he made it one condition of the bargain, that the humble friend of that house, his highly-deserving Nurse, should receive from the purchaser an annuity for her life, of twenty pounds a year.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER V.

FROM THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE YEAR 1787, TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF MRS. HAYLEY IN DERBY.

Is it not Dr. Johnson who observes, that "we trace the life of a hero from battle to battle, and that of an author from book to book?" The only work which Hayley sent to the press in 1787, was a little volume of *Dialogues*, in which he compared the two eminent and extraordinary characters of Johnson and Chesterfield. Hayley conveyed his manuscript of this singular composition to the friendly little circle of his London critics in April. It obtained their full approbation, and he revised some proof sheets of it before he returned to Eartham. During his present visit to the metropolis, as his usual apartment in the house of his friend Romney was occupied by the son of the artist, then an invalid, the poet resided under the roof of his friend Mr. Clyfford, in Lincoln's-Inn Fields.

In a letter of April 28th, Hayley sent to Eartham the following account of himself and his friends. "The young man is better, and Romney so much revived, that he met me yesterday morning at the cell of our pleasant and polite divine, Dr. Warner, (in Barnard's Inn,) who makes breakfast for me and our beloved painter every morning between six and seven, which is parti-

Digitized by Google

cularly convenient and agreeable, as the common breakfast hour of Clyfford's house is nine."

The intimacy which subsisted for several years between Warner and Hayley, arose in 1786, when the benevolent and enthusiastic divine sought the acquaintance of the author, whom he wished to co-operate with him in his generous idea of raising a statue to the beneficent Howard, the visitor of prisons; an idea which the genuine and delicate modesty of the great philanthropist obliged his warm-hearted ecclesiastical admirer to postpone, and convert into memorials of his virtue, more suited to the pure feelings of that incomparable man. Warner was a sincere enthusiast in friendship, and his high regard for Hayley remained undiminished to the end of his own active life. His death was the consequence of an indiscreet act of good-nature, which will be mentioned under the year of that unexpected event. At the season of which we are now treating, the divine might be regarded as a rare example of sprightly benevolent activity, and athletic health. It was ever the kind wish of Dr. Warner to render Hayley familiar with all his most respectable friends. The poet, in his letter to Eartham, of April 30th, makes the following mention of the first visit which they made together to the celebrated George Selwyn. "After writing till one o'clock, I sallied forth with Dr. Warner, to return a visit with which his friend Mr. Selwyn had the politeness to honour me yesterday. I was much pleased with this courteous old man, who, instead of having the air of a sarcastic wit, has the manners of a high-bred courtier of the last age, or of one that you may suppose to have flourished at the Court of Louis XIV."

Digitized by Google

Hayley had frequent opportunities of enjoying the conversation of this truly polite gentleman, so universally renowned for his colloquial vivacity; and expressed a just sense of his talents and character, in the following verses composed on his decease:

A tear to Selwyn let the Graces give!
(If, their gay fav'rite lost, they yet may live,)
With rapid kindness teach oblivion's pall
O'er the sunk foibles of the man to fall,
And fondly dictate to a faithful muse
The prime distinction of the friend they lose!
'Twas social wit, which, never kindling strife,
Blazed in the small sweet courtesies of life:
Those little sapphires round the diamond shone,
Lending soft radiance to the richer stone.

In writing to his Eliza on the 3d of May, he said, "Let me also give you the pleasure of hearing that our excellent friend Mr. Howard, with whom I passed some time this morning, was kind enough to remember us in Turkey; and has brought you a little present of a Turkish towel, to wipe the face, which the delicate ladies of Constantinople use for their complexions."

It is pleasing to observe in this illustrious man, a little instance of delicate and friendly attention to a lady: and here it may be proper to remark, that he entered most feelingly into all the domestic distress of his poetical eulogist, and tenderly offered to Hayley an unlimited use of his house in Bedfordshire, if it could prove in any degree serviceable and convenient to him, for amusing the unquiet spirit of his pitiable Eliza. The continual solicitude of the poet, to tranquillize and amuse her mind, is

Digitized by Google

abundantly displayed in his numerous letters to her, and cheerfully in the following.

"May 5, 1787.

"I rise in the middle of a late dinner, to return you many "thanks for your very kind and comfortable letters and parcel, "before the early bell hurries this scrap of an epistle into the "postman's bag.

"Mrs. Clyfford and her little niece conducted me in quest of "a sensitive plant for Romney this morning, and I have been "most agreeably and surprisingly flattered by the botanist, Mr. "Lee, whose dedication to Linnæus we lately read together.

"He had somehow or other found me out since I was with "him in the winter; and when I offered to pay for the plant I "had chosen, he not only refused to accept any money, but said, "'Sir, you are a *very great man*, to whom I shall be particularly "happy to shew every little civility in my power: I am sorry "that my lame foot and your haste, prevent my making up a "nosegay for the lady in the carriage.'

"I replied, with great truth, that I never found my name of "so much service to me before, and that I was flattered in the "most pleasing manner by his unexpected courtesy. In order "to make him the best return in my power, I formed an appointment to conduct his daughter to see Romney's pictures on "Monday, and I made the good-natured old man promise to "visit me in Sussex.

"This enlivening anecdote will, I trust, atone for a very rapid "scrawl, which I despatch on Clyfford's piano-forte, while the

Digitized by Google

"three good folks of this house are finishing their dinner at the "adjoining table.

"I have just received the first proof sheet of the *Dialogues*, "from the printer, and hope the whole will be completed in a "fortnight. I shall not wait to correct the whole, but hope to "reach home in little more than a week. God bless you all."

The author returned to his favourite retirement by the time he proposed; and the *Dialogues*, which he conveyed to the press and retouched in London, were published in the course of a few weeks.

It has been remarked, I believe, by various writers, that the composition of Dialogues has never been very prevalent in our country. The *Dialogues* on Chesterfield and Johnson, did not prove a very popular book; though it obtained very high commendation from some of the most accomplished judges of literature, particularly from Gibbon and Miss Seward. The latter says, in a letter to her friend of Eartham, July 13, 1787, "Let me thank you for the infinite entertainment and satisfaction I have received since I came home, a week ago, in reading the just, the spirited, the highly ingenious volume on Chesterfield and Johnson! Miss W. mentioned it to me in a letter, while I was at Ludlow, in terms of glowing delight. She says, it is impossible to mistake its author, adding that it is generally concluded to be Mr. Hayley's."

Gibbon said of it, that it would have the lot of almost all books that breathe a genuine spirit of truth and moderation. It

Digitized by Google

would not, at first, please either of the parties whom it aspired to reconcile; but its merits would be fairly and favourably appreciated by time.

Hayley, in a letter to Romney, of June 1787, speaks in the following words of his own literary occupation at that time:

"I am just beginning to work on our magical opera, and par-
"ticularly long for your inspiring society."

The opera alluded to, was the German drama which the warm-hearted Meyer was so eager to render lucrative to his poetical friend. Harris did not approve the plan of it, as it was translated at first. That circumstance did not discourage the two active friends, but inspired Hayley with an idea of introducing new characters and new scenery. He metamorphosed the Green Island into the rock of Gibraltar, at the time of the Moorish Caliphs in Spain; and by the aid of magical personages, made the performances close with a compliment to the bravery of his countrymen, and their gallant defence of the rock.

The different opinions of two managers on this drama, and the singular gratification which it obtained for Hayley, will be mentioned under a subsequent year.

In October, 1787, Hayley visited London again, and with the advice and assistance of his benevolent friend Dr. Warner, provided himself with a cheap, pleasant, and useful residence in town, for literary purposes. This residence consisted of an airy set of chambers, in Barnard's Inn, immediately over those inhabited by the friendly divine. Of this residence, Hayley speaks in the following terms, in a letter to his Eliza, October 22, 1787.

Digitized by Google

"I have been walking through wet streets with my good Reve-
"rend Pastor, to collect the few odd things that I shall want in
"my cell; which he has kindly got into such good order for me,
"that I hope to sleep there in a night or two. The room is so
"airy and tranquil, that I shall fancy myself at College again,
"instead of being in the bustling metropolis. Indeed, I shall
"rather live as an old fellow of a College, than a London gen-
"tleman; having resolved to refus all invitations to London
"festivity. I have taken possession of Clyfford's vacant house
"as my home; and shall continue to have all letters, messages,
"and visits, addressed to me there, as I intend to make my cell
"as undisturbed a scene of study, as Romney makes the riding
"house at Eartham."

The advantage of his London cell enabled the Sussex poet to enjoy, in a most economical and pleasing manner, a familiar intercourse with old and new friends, whose conversation interested and delighted him in the highest degree.

The account that he sent to his Eliza, of his first interview with Gibbon this year, seems to claim a place in this Memoir.

"*November* 19, 1787.

'I hope it will give you great pleasure to hear that I had two
"hours of most pleasant conversation with the Roman Eagle,
"yesterday evening. My good friend Elmsley informed me
"that he was to arrive from Lord Sheffield's, to a late
"dinner at a lodging-house in Pall-mall. He had requested
"that courteous and intelligent bookseller to come and chat an

Digitized by Google

"hour with him alone, and we had agreed to go together; but "Elmsley being unavoidably engaged with a foreigner of "distinction, it was my lot to go without any attendant. I "refused joining a party to dinner at Romney's, that by eating a "more hasty dinner in my cell, I might catch the Eagle just "alighted on his new and temporary perch. I luckily arrived at "the moment when his dinner had just left the room, and found "him in perfect solitude on a sofa. He expressed the most "flattering kind of surprise at the sight of me, and said, with his "usual force of expression, 'I am both overjoyed and ashamed "to see you.' I told him very frankly my apprehensions, that "some one had poisoned his mind against me, and occasioned "a silence so unlike our former animated intercourse. He "replied, with great feeling, 'I assure you, on my honour, that "no such attempt has been made by any person whatever, and "if it had been made by a hundred people, they would all have "failed of success." He then made a very candid apology for "his habitual indolence in regard to writing letters, and said "every thing that could tend to assure me of his invariable "regard. After these marks of his kindness, you will, I am sure, "rejoice to hear, that I thought him infinitely improved in "health. His countenance has much better colouring, and his "person is not so corpulent as when I saw him on his departure "for Switzerland. He remains here a fortnight, then pays a "visit of duty to your old acquaintance at Bath, his excellent "mother-in-law, and returns to remain at Sheffield-place till the "middle of January. He has pressed me to pass a few days

Digitized by Google

" with him there, with many polite compliments from the noble " Lord, his host: but I had rather see him under my own roof, " if possible, than visit him under that of any Lord of the " land."

It was a sincere delight to Hayley, to renew his familiar intercourse with the great historian, whom he admired and esteemed in various points of view, as an author, a companion, and a friend. He mentions his frequent visits to Pall-mall, in subsequent letters of this year—November 24, " I found Gibbon this morning in a " fresh fit of the gout. He seemed to be as eager to have some " private literary conversation with me, as I am to converse " with him." Again, November 26, " I am going this evening " to read an hour or two to the imprisoned Eagle, who is highly " affectionate and flattering in his behaviour to me. I have this " morning had the honour of an interview with another most " respectable author, who solicited my acquaintance; I mean " General Burgoyne, whom I found very pleasant, and cordial " in expressions of regard to me. You will think me grown a " vain coxcomb indeed, if I talk longer in this strain. I will, " therefore, conclude this account of my own consequence, by " saying, with the greatest truth, that I had much rather be the " *most beloved* than the most *flattered* man in the world."

The evening in which the poet had promised to read to the confined historian, was to the former a memorable evening, and one of which he used to speak with peculiar pleasure. The book

Digitized by Google

he had engaged to read was a manuscript poem in cantos, which he had eagerly begun, but in which he had not advanced beyond a few lines of a second canto. He said to Gibbon, "I will frankly tell you a perplexing circumstance concerning the commencement of a work that I have brought, in the hope of amusing you. The single canto that I have finished, has been submitted to two of my intimate critical friends. One says, 'Proceed, by all means;' the other tells me I had better not. Will you favour me with your casting vote in this perplexity?" "I will give you my sincere and unreserved opinion," said Gibbon, with great cordiality, "if you will favour me by reading the canto." The poet began, and was not a little pleased to observe, that the story seized the attention and interested the heart of his illustrious auditor. When the reading was ended, Gibbon exclaimed, with great animation: "You have gratified and obliged me in no common degree. When you began to read, I was suffering not a little from my tormenting complaint, the gout; but you gradually charmed away my sense of pain, and I assure you, with perfect truth, that I have been highly entertained. If your poem proceeds as it begins, I am persuaded it must have great success."

Delightfully encouraging as this applause appeared to the poet, he was prevented by a variety of avocations from pursuing the composition, of which Gibbon spoke so favourably. The attention of Hayley, at this time, was directed to the theatre, as he wished to produce both an opera and a tragedy; but meeting with continual delays and disappointments in his theatrical

Digitized by Google

expectations, he returned to Eartham, in the end of November. His excursion had improved his health, although it had not gratified him with any dramatic success; and he enjoyed the delight of improving the spirits of his friend Romney, whom he attended with other friends on a visit to the cartoons of Raphael at Windsor; a visit of various gratification, that Hayley has recorded in the biographical volume, in which he endeavoured to render the most affectionate justice to all the endearing talents, and virtues of his favourite artist! In their excursion to Windsor, Hayley seized the opportunity of visiting some of his old friends of Eton; Dr. Roberts, the provost,who had been his tutor, and Dr. George Heath, who had been the boy immediately above Hayley in school, and one of his most intimate friends and fellow students in their hours of private study.

One of the most remarkable characteristics in the temper of Hayley, was a facility of raising fresh hopes, after the overthrow of any favourite project. It appears from the series of his letters, that he was in London again as early as the 12th February, in 1781, and probably for a dramatic purpose. He remained there but a single week, and there is ground to conjecture, that his speedy return to Eartham was occasioned by a rejection of his new-modelled opera, which Meyer introduced once more to the manager of Covent-Garden. This conjecture is founded on the passage of a letter to his Eliza, in the following April, in which he says; "Meyer and I are now laying our two wise heads together, to set our poor enchanted Prince on his legs, in the Haymarket."

Digitized by Google

A letter to the same person, dated April 18, 1788, has the following remarkable passage:

"The name of Cecilia reminds me of that admirable writer, "who resembling you in some talents, resembled you also in the "passion which you lately expressed, to engage in the service of "the Queen; but who finds from experience, that the honour and "emolument arising from such service is an insufficient compen-"sation for the various misery that belongs to it. She has, "therefore, I hear, resigned her employment. Let us grow wise "by this example, and not wish for any splendid vexation. "Rousseau says, (I think with great truth,) '*La première* "*sagesse est de vouloir ce qui est, et de régler son cœur sur sa* "*destinée.*' This sage maxim is very reasonable *for me* at present, "who coming to London with an assurance, that the chancellor "was desirous of my acquaintance, am at this moment uncertain "whether he will be able to find an hour or two of leisure to "receive me or not. As I am happily enthusiastic enough to "rejoice more in the good fortune of my friends than I grieve "for any ill luck that happens to myself, I enjoy the prosperity of "my pleasant fellow traveller, Carwardine, who, after being much "harassed by the necessary business relating to his new prefer-"ment, was yesterday prepared in my cell, for the ceremony of "St. Paul's; and having arrayed himself in the black robes of "Dr. Warner, proceeded to take possession of his stall in due "form, and received episcopal benediction."

Digitized by Google

This very pleasant and friendly divine, Carwardine, had lately visited Hayley in Sussex; and travelled with him to London, full of a benevolent desire to render his friend, the poet, very familiar with his kind patron, the Chancellor Thurlow; a desire in which his sprightly and conciliating spirit enabled him to succeed; as the progress of this narrative may prove. But we have first to notice some dramatic adventures and other engagements of the author. Our account of these may be given, perhaps, most satisfactorily, by the following selection of passages from his letters to Eliza.

"*April* 19, 1788.

"I yesterday promised you a little history of Colman. I had "a second polite and friendly billet from him, in the evening, in "reply to the answer I sent to his first. He seems desirous of "exhibiting our drama. My dramatic brother Meyer, and I, are "to visit him at his Richmond villa, on Tuesday, which he has in "the most gracious manner entreated us to do, that we may have "a full conference on the subject. The opinion he has already "given me of the piece, is in many points highly flattering; but "discovers in a most forcible and singular light, the curious "uncertainty of criticism. You may remember, that Harris and "Long, who both admired the songs, were vehement against my "serious scenes of blank verse. Now observe the contrast! "Colman says, those very scenes are delightful; and that the "drama will be much improved by leaving out most of the airs. "I think he is for retaining the music only in the magical scenes;

Digitized by Google

" but he says, he thinks the piece *will thrive*, and ought to thrive, " in this country. We are to hear his fuller sentiments when " we meet. This prospect is certainly enlivening; and doubly " so, as it gives me reason to hope, that I shall be able to treat " myself with a trip to Eartham very soon; and secondly, that I " may be able to treat you with a trip to London, subsequent to " my return, yet so early in the summer, that you may catch a " sight of the grand spectacle in Westminster Hall, and of *The* " *Enchanted Prince*, if he escapes and prospers, as we have now " some reason to hope he may. Hope therefore the best! and " amuse your fancy with a lively expectation of this probable " gratification."

In a letter of the 23d, he gives the following account of the visit to Colman:

" The petty Monarch received us graciously, and said many " flattering things. Heaven grant his actions may correspond " with his words! but he wants a little time to re-consider, and " so forth. In short, we returned not much *wiser* than we went, " though with some fresh hopes of more agreeable and less " equivocal favour. His producing the opera, will, I believe, " depend on a female performer, of whom he is not yet sure " himself. Thus, you see, patience is requisite in all pursuits. " Mine has been sufficiently tried in dramatic matters, and thank " Heaven, it does not fail me at present. I wish myself, how- " ever, most heartily in the sweeter air of Eartham, and shall " hope to be there in the course of next week. Poor Romney

Digitized by Google

" looks ill, and is very low, which throws a gloom also on my " imagination; but as my temper is naturally of the high san- " guine cast, I still hope the best; and if I am foiled, at last, by " the little manager, I shall still sing or say, in the words of " the song,

" ' Rich the house we might have had,
" ' But content is richer still.' "

The native cheerfulness of the poet was now severely overcast by the darkest clouds of apprehension for the fate of his young friend, Captain Howell. His letter, of the 30th April, describes his feelings on this subject:

" A day of extreme heat has put me into a state of flat spirits, " not a little increased by fears concerning the safety of Howell. " As I yesterday went to make some inquiries of his Colonel, " Fullarton, in Berkeley-square, I met at his door an officer, just " arrived in the Danish ship we have talked of. He was of " Howell's regiment, and knew him well. I took him into the " Colonel's vacant parlour, and conversed with him an hour, " upon the most interesting of all topics, the life and reputation " of our young soldier. Our conference did not pass without " tears both of pleasure and of pain; of pleasure, in the very " honourable character which I find he bore among all who knew " him best; and of pain, in the dreadful uncertainty concerning " his fate. Instead of having embarked on board this Danish " vessel, as I supposed, he was in a Dutch ship, which sailed " almost two years ago from Bengal, and which has not been

Digitized by Google

"heard of even at the Cape, where the officer I conversed with "made particular inquiries concerning Howell, for whom he "appears to have a great regard; and of whose prosperous "circumstances he gave me a very unexpected and surprising "account. He has promised me some intelligence of our friend, "still later than he could give himself; the name of the Dutch "vessel, &c. &c. He seemed, however, to have little hopes of "his safety, and I confess this great cause for apprehension has "shaken my nerves so painfully, that I have been ready in the "course of this morning to burst frequently into tears, in convers-"ing with various people on indifferent topics. I am determined "to be at home on Sunday, if possible, as I am in that state of "mind, in which the quiet of my own library is the most desirable "scene to me."

The calamitous destiny of this young friend was a severe wound to Hayley, who had been induced by his amiable qualities to treat him like an adopted son, and cherished the lively hope of seeing him one of the most accomplished and eminent soldiers of the age.

The poet was strongly invited to remain longer in London, and attend a convivial meeting at Cadell's, to celebrate the birthday of his friend Gibbon, and the publication of two recent volumes of his history. He excused himself from attending the scene of festivity, which he mentions in a letter dated the 2d of May, in the following words: "I have written a few stanzas "to serve as my proxy at the festive table on Gibbon's day of

Digitized by Google

"publication; he has most kindly presented to me the new "volumes, and our conference on poor Howell, yesterday "morning, was pathetic in a great degree. He said, I put him "in mind of the Duke of Ormond's speech, on the death of "Lord Ossory. You remember *that noble* father said, "'He would "not exchange his dead son, for any living son in Christendom."'

Hayley returned to Eartham in a day or two after he had given this account of himself, and sought in the new pages of the friendly historian a lenitive for the various afflictions that pressed upon his heart. The irregular health and restless spirits of his poor Eliza obliged him to station her in a lodging at Felpham, during great part of this summer and autumn, for the benefit of sea-bathing: and in this year, he was so much incommoded by the obstinate tendency to inflammation in the eyes, that being unable to advance in Gibbon's new volumes, as he wished, without a reading assistant, he was induced to borrow the eyes of his good old Nurse, who came to him on a visit from Petworth, where she had fixed her retreat; and though her imperfect articulation often injured the harmony of the historian's language, her serious and her comic remarks on his merits and his foibles, made most amusing amends for all the defects of her elocution. Her passion for books was hardly inferior to that of her master, and it was therefore a high gratification to her to read and comment on the new volumes of the illustrious historian, whom she had enjoyed the pleasure of seeing as a guest at Eartham.

Digitized by Google

One of the most pleasing antidotes to the afflictions of this year, was the delight the poet enjoyed in contributing to the revival of his friend Romney, who had suffered from severe illness, but was happily enabled to paint with new spirit and success, this autumn, during his annual visit to the retirement of Hayley. In October, the poet was called to London by a pressing solicitation from his esteemed friend, Dr. Kippis, to gratify the votaries of constitutional liberty, by a poem on the anniversary, which the admirers of King William were preparing to celebrate. The invitation was in unison with the poet's principles and feelings; but he had hardly reached his cell in Barnard's Inn, where he wished to compose the occasional poem requested, when a new affliction threw a gloom over his mind. He mentioned it in the following words of a letter to his Eliza:

"*October* 20th, 1788.

"I thought to have sent you a very cheerful letter to-day, "for I had a pleasant conference in the morning with Kippis "and Cracherode; but I have since been greatly surprised and "deeply afflicted, by a letter from Derby. Beridge is dead. "I thought myself completely prepared for this event; but my "heart tells me in this moment, that in all points of affection, I "am as weak as a woman."

The very amiable physician, thus lamented, was one of the earliest and most beloved friends of Hayley, who expressed his sense of the qualities that endeared the deceased, by the following epitaph:

Digitized by Google

"These hallowed stones an English heart enfold;
Warm, tender, steady, simple, just, and bold.
A christian who fulfilled his Saviour's law,
To man with charity, to God with awe.
This praise, dear Beridge! to thy tomb is due,
Pure as thy spirit, as thy friendship true."

The poet endeavoured to soothe and fortify his mind under his recent affliction, by celebrating the hero William, the deliverer of England and of Europe.

He composed the occasional stanzas in Barnard's Inn, and added to it a poetical epistle from Queen Mary to King William, which he happened to have in manuscript, as the delight he felt in reading the pathetic letters of that fair Sovereign, when they were first published, had induced him to give a poetical dress to the sentiments of the Queen. The two poems united in quarto were circulated on the constitutional festival, the 4th of November, and a letter from the poet to his Eliza, on the 5th, has the following passage:

"Your little ambitious disciple will, I think, be much gratified "in seeing how highly his favourite poet is flattered by so great "a man as my Lord Chancellor. I sent him last night, a copy "of the stanzas, &c. and he returned, very early this morning, "a note directed to me at Clyfford's.

"'The Chancellor presents his best respects to Mr. Hayley, "and returns him many thanks for his poems. They give a "bright relief to the subject. William is much obliged to him,

Digitized by Google

"and Mary more; and, if it may be said without offence, liberty "itself derives advantage from this dress.'

"There's flattery for you, from the great! Can any poetical "vanity wish for more? I told the angelic Cracherode, this "morning, that I called on him to give me a sermon on humility, "lest my head should turn with the adulation I have received."

The poet might have found a sufficient antidote against vanity on this occasion, in the very moderate sale of his production, which, though well recited at a very numerous public meeting, and extolled by many private friends, was very far from becoming popular. The publication had, however, the good fortune to accelerate, what the friendly Carwardine had so much wished to produce, a very familiar and pleasing intercourse between the Chancellor and the Poet. The alarming illness of the King seemed likely to prevent their meeting, as we learn from the following passages in the letters of Hayley:

"*November* 7.

"The illness of the King makes a deep impression on all "ranks of people; and few monarchs, I believe, have had their "lives more sincerely prayed for."

Again,

"*November* 10.

"I shall not expect to see my polite friend and flatterer, the "Chancellor, if the King remains in his present afflicting state, "which renders his life the great object of universal attention."

Digitized by Google

The arrival of the good-natured Carwardine in London, soon produced, what he was so anxious to promote, that social familiarity between Thurlow and Hayley, the rise of which is described in the following extracts from the letters of the poet:

"*November* 11.

"It will, I know, afford you pleasure to hear that I am "engaged to breakfast with the Chancellor, at eight to-morrow "morning. He has sent me a most polite and cordial invitation "by our friend Carwardine."

"*November* 12.

"Though honours are seldom, I believe, found to be real "enjoyments, yet I may truly say, that I have had the honour "of breakfasting to-day, with the Chancellor, and thoroughly "enjoyed it.

"Breakfast, you know, is my favourite social hour; and "though I was by no means recovered from an oppressive cold, "yet I passed a very pleasant hour, or rather two, with this "singular great man.

"Carwardine, who was the *Sir Clement*, and the only person "present at our conference, was highly amused by a very warm "debate between us, in which he says, we took exactly the "opposite ground, from what he should have expected from "our personal characters.

"The stern Thurlow was the advocate for natural affections, "and the feeling poet defended the violation of them.

Digitized by Google

"You will guess by this circumstance, that our conversation "turned on Queen Mary; and of course, that I contended "most ardently for the integrity of her conduct.

"We talked also of Romney, and the whole conversation was "highly agreeable.

"On my entrance, I told him, that I was particularly flattered in "being admitted at that friendly hour; for that I was such a "hermit, and such a humourist, that I had a horror of dining with "a great man. As we came away, he said he hoped I would come "some day to a private dinner with him, where there was no "more form than at his breakfast table; to which I replied, that "if I found his dinner like his breakfast, I would come whenever "he pleased. In short, we are become agreeably acquainted, "and politely familiar, to the great joy of the amiable Carwar-"dine, who has long made it the prime wish of his heart to bring "us together."

Hayley always regarded this introduction to Lord Thurlow, as one of the most fortunate incidents of his life, because it enabled him in a future season, to render essential service to his favourite friend Cowper; with whom he was not yet acquainted. He seems to have gained considerable influence with the Chancellor, before he returned to Sussex; and the use he made of that influence, will appear under those years, when he became intimate with the poet of Weston. It does not appear from his letters to Eliza, that any immediate success in his theatrical wishes attended him during his present visit to London; but it

Digitized by Google

afforded him a variety of literary gratifications, and among them the pleasure of seeing his confidential friends much amused and interested by a private composition, parts of which he read to them in Barnard's-Inn. Some account of it shall be given under the subsequent year, when it was published anonymously, in four pocket volumes. We may conclude the history of 1788, with a pleasing proof of Romney's affectionate liberality, in procuring from other artists new similitudes of his poetical friend. The occurrences alluded to are related in the following passages of a letter to Eliza:

"*November* 19.

"Pray let me prepare you to see me return one of the vainest "coxcombs on earth, both as to the inside and the outside of my "head; for both have been flattered egregiously, particularly the "latter. The dear liberal *Pittore* has been throwing away "above thirty guineas in procuring for himself different repre-"sentations of my face.

"First, I am sitting for him to a young female genius in "miniature, who at the age of seventeen, will, I trust, under his "patronage, most comfortably raise, and support by her won-"derful talent, a drooping family, consisting of a mother and "six brothers and sisters. She is the child of an inferior painter, "who suffered a palsy three years, and lately died. Heaven "seems to have inspired his child for the preservation of her "relation. She is a pretty, modest, and sensible girl. I carried "the good Carwardine to see her yesterday. He has the kind-

Digitized by Google

"ness to give her some instructions concerning the management "of ivory, and the candour to own that she paints a hundred "times better than himself.

"Secondly, I am sitting to a famous sculptor of gems, just "arrived from Rome; an Englishman, and one for whom "Romney has a great regard. He is to make a head of me on "an onyx, as a seal for our beloved painter."

The artists alluded to, were Miss Fouldstone and Marchant. The miniature, by the former, was regarded as a strong resemblance; but the gem, which proved a cameo, instead of being as it was proposed at first, an intaglio, did not satisfy Romney, who had rather embarrassed than assisted the engraver, by giving him instructions with his pencil for the likeness, instead of leaving him to work according to his own view of the features he tried to represent. Hayley returned to Eartham on the 29th November, and devoted the residue of the year to that composition which appeared in the spring of 1789.

The mental infirmity of his poor Eliza, and his own impaired health, had rendered it more and more necessary for him to accomplish at last, that plan of amicable separation, which he had once settled, but which he relinquished, that he might not overburthen his friend, Dr. Beridge, whose declining health had indeed rendered him unfit for the anxious charge, which in his more healthy season, he had been willing to assume.

The decease of that highly amiable man, and the steady friendship which his widow continued to express for her friends

Digitized by Google

of Sussex, induced Hayley, in the commencement of the new year, to resume his design of placing his Eliza at Derby. She looked forward with some satisfaction to this prospect, from a double consideration; first, as she had many highly esteemed friends in that part of the world; and secondly, as the poet of Eartham had a plan of passing a few years abroad with his son, and hoped to enjoy a survey of Rome, while his friend Flaxman was residing in that city, in the most ardent and judicious pursuit of his professional studies.

From the letters of Hayley, it appears, that the new project of Derby was amicably settled, as early as February 5th, 1789, though it was not accomplished before the end of April. In the mean time, the author revised the proof sheets of the four volumes alluded to in our account of the preceding year. These volumes were nothing more or less than a novel, which a singular incident induced the poet to compose. It happened that in revising for his literary friend, Charlotte Smith, one of her novels in manuscript, he objected to her mode of terminating the story, and suggested a new train of occurrences for that purpose. The lady, of a most lively and powerful imagination, had anticipated the objections of her friendly critic, and forming from her own fancy a new catastrophe for her composition, had no occasion to avail herself of the poet's suggestion. The idea, however, that he had started, appeared too good to be utterly lost; and he was therefore tempted to build upon it the novel in a series of letters, which he entitled, *The Young Widow, or The History of Cornelia Sedley*. It was written with so

Digitized by Google

pure a design to promote the interest of religion, that the author was tempted to send a handsome copy of the performance, with the following anonymous letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury.

"*March*, 1789.

"My Lord,

"The questionable shape, and title of the work, which is "here presented to your Grace, might lead an hasty spirit to "censure, as an insolent impertinence, what is truly designed "as an act of serious and cordial respect.

"As there is, perhaps, no species of composition so universally "read as a novel, and as much harm has been often done by "works of this class, it is surely to be wished, that a vehicle "so alluring might be effectually employed in the service of "religion.

"Indeed, this province of literature would be happily ennobled, "if those who possess the talents to excel in it would more "frequently render so favourite an amusement a lesson of Chris-"tianity. As these little volumes were written under this idea, "if they correspond in any degree with the design of their "author, they cannot be utterly unworthy of your Grace's "acceptance, especially as he has no lucrative favour to ask; "but having once received from you a little flattering compli-"ment, which he had no opportunity of acknowledging, he is "eager to seize any occasion to express what he warmly "feels, a sincere esteem for your grace, as a Gentleman and a "scholar.

Digitized by Google

"If this circumstance should betray the author, he has only "to entreat that you will be so indulgent (not to his vanity, but "to his benevolence,) as to keep his secret; because the obser- "vation of some years has convinced him, that in the literary "world the moral tendency of a publication is often greatly "promoted by the concealment of its author.

"The chief aim of the work before you is, to exhibit an "elegant young widow, struggling between her maternal affec- "tions, and an attachment of the heart to an engaging infidel, "supported in her severe conflict by sentiments of piety. And "to shew in the other sex, that the most dazzling and attractive "qualities produce only misery to their possessor, if they are "destitute of that primary grace in an accomplished character, "a proper sense of religion.

"To diffuse and enforce a truth of this kind, by a popular "work of captivating eloquence, would surely be productive of "the happiest effects; and it is presumed that a mere attempt "of this nature will induce your Grace to pardon an intruder, "whom you may probably never know, from the precautions he "has taken to conceal his name, though he is in truth, with the "utmost sincerity and respect,

"Your Grace's obliged and obedient servant."

Good as the intentions of the author were in composing this novel, and sanguine as he was in his hope of seeing it popular, it did not become a favourite with the public. It proved, however, of considerable service to the writer, in supplying him

Digitized by Google

with a sum of money, at a season, when his extraordinary and inevitable expenses would otherwise have been very oppressive. For this advantage he was partly indebted to the zealous friendship of Dr. Warner, who sold the novel for him to a respectable bookseller, for 200l.: and it appears from an article in the yearly memorandum book of Hayley, that the second hundred of the purchase money was received in April, 1789. Here it seems proper to add, to shew the integrity of the author, that fearing the liberal purchaser might be a loser by the bargain, he presented to him, spontaneously, in a future season, an anonymous manuscript, which formed a slender pocket volume, and passed through more than one edition. It was entitled, *Eulogies of Howard*, and composed soon after the mind and heart of Hayley had been much affected by his hearing the fate of that illustrious friend to suffering humanity.

Let us now return to the spring of 1789. The poet anxiously prepared for the painful but necessary measure of removing his piteous Eliza to the north. Previous to his setting forth from Eartham, he had stationed her on a visit to their invaluable friend Mrs. Nicholas, at Molcombe, a villa connected with Goodwood, and inhabited by the family of Mr. Nicholas.

In a letter written from that friendly scene, March 26, to the poet, still at Eartham, she says:

"I thank you for your kind attention, which increases the "comfort, and quiet of mind I at present enjoy."

Digitized by Google

The plan was settled for Hayley and his son to travel first, by themselves, to London; and after adjusting various concerns in town, to prepare a lodging there in which they might receive Eliza, and entertain her with the sights of the metropolis for a week, before her husband escorted her to Derby.

In a billet from Eartham to Molcombe, on the 26th March, the poet says:

"We shall set forth with much more satisfaction, if we "are first assured, that none of you suffered from the "stormy evening of yesterday. We rejoice in the prospect of "fine weather for our travels, for which my little companion is "preparing as eagerly as the young Anacharsis could possibly "do for a survey of Athens."

The young traveller, who was now between eight and nine years of age, was enchanted with the idea of seeing the metropolis; and as his father said of him, in his first letter on their arrival in Barnard's Inn, "he was highly pleased, and highly pleasing in his remarks and questions."

A few extracts from the letters of this period, may prove not uninteresting.

"*April* 2, 1789.

"My dear Eliza,

"I have this instant found your comfortable letter, in "returning from the first of my morning walks. I sallied forth "early, and just after hard rain, in the hope of catching the "peerless Howard in his lodgings. I luckily succeeded, and

Digitized by Google

"passed a delightful half hour with him, in which we talked of "his new projected expedition, to visit the sources of the plague. "I am more and more charmed with this quiet enthusiast, who is "calmly preparing to visit Egypt, Æthiopia, &c., and repeatedly "to shake hands with the pestilence, for the benefit of mankind.

"Romney and Carwardine went with us last night into the "pit of Covent-Garden; not to see a play, but Mr. Walker's "Eidouranion, or immense Orrery, of which I shall let the Lilli-"putian philosopher give you his own account, on the opposite "page, adding only our united love to you, and all with you."

The postscript from the little traveller of eight years, may deserve a place here, as it may gratify some readers to observe how a child wrote at that age, who displayed, as a youth, uncommon talents both for the pencil and the pen.

"Dear Mamma,

"I am very much obliged to you for your letter. The "magnificent scene in the playhouse is beyond my description; "it was so beautiful; but I have saved a little book, to give "you an account of it.

"I am your most affectionate

"Tom Tit."

The next letter of the poet affords a remarkable proof of his kind intentions towards the poor sufferer, whom he felt himself

Digitized by Google

obliged to remove from him, and also of the cheerful and devout spirit with which he contemplated the dispensations of Providence.

"*April* 14, 1789.

"Though I did not intend writing again till Thursday, yet I "cannot refrain from thanking you immediately for your kind "letter received to-day, and telling you at the same time a cir-"cumstance, which has just affected me with a singular mixture "of pain and satisfaction. I have a letter from India, which, "while it tends to confirm the loss of poor Howell, does honour "to his character in a point where, like myself, he was most "likely to fail, in economy. His friends there, who are "extremely honest, have so much cash of his in their hands, "that I shall ultimately be repaid, I believe, for all I have "expended to promote the prosperity of this admirable but ill-"fated friend. It is singular that many incidents have conspired "to make the property he has left so considerable; and that it "should be left to me at a time, when my own ill-fortune has "made money of more consequence to me than ever. I con-"sider this as a striking proof, that Providence never suffers "benevolent and generous conduct to be finally injurious to "those who seem to be in danger of suffering from it.

"A considerable time must elapse before I can receive what-"ever can be remitted; but I hope, whatever is to come will "come safe, and enable me hereafter to increase, in some future "year, your little Derbyshire revenue."

Digitized by Google

To obviate a recurrence to this subject, it may be proper to observe here, that these hopes were fulfilled. The poet received a remittance from the effects of the young soldier, whom he had patronised, by the great kindness of Mr. William Burke, who treated the grateful Howell with the tender liberality of a father. His great obligations to that gentleman are fully displayed in a memoir appropriated to the interesting orphan, who, in the commencement of his martial career, appeared to be uncommonly prosperous.

The next letter of Hayley to his Eliza mentions a talent which she inherited from her hapless mother:

"*April* 16, 1789.

"I hope you are all, at Molcombe, such warm friends to the "Muses of Derbyshire, as to be engaged and delighted in "reading Dr. Darwin's new poem, *The Botanic Garden*, which "has recently made its appearance.

"I have read it with great pleasure; and have pleased myself "with the idea, that you will be highly entertained with the "poetry, and the flowers of this botanical poet. He, in his "turn, will admire the singular elegance with which you may "hereafter cut for him, in paper, some of his favourite plants. "He speaks in his notes, which are extremely amusing, of an "elegant paper-garden of flowers, by Mrs. Delany; but I "think, without a compliment, you may rival any artist of that "kind."

Digitized by Google

Hayley at this time informed the expected traveller, that he had provided a commodious lodging for her in the street where they used to reside, Great Queen-street. His solicitude that she should be agreeably amused, during the week that she wished to pass in London, appears from the following passage of a letter on the 16th:

"Warner is not yet returned from Paris; but he writes word "he shall be at home before the 23d.; and I hope he will; "as I depend on him to secure a place for you in the house of his "great friends in Fleet-street, to see the grand show of that day."

Perhaps no man, on the point of removing from him a wife, with whom he felt it impossible to live, ever shewed more tender or more sincere anxiety, to promote her ease, comfort, and welfare, to the utmost of his power, than Hayley manifested, in conducting all this painful business.

What he felt, and what his countenance proved him to have felt on the occasion, may be conjectured from some striking expressions of his intellectual and affectionate valet, Harry, which shall be reserved for the closing words of this chapter.

The poet, after receiving his Eliza in London, and remaining there with her a week, escorted her, on the 27th of April, to the house of their benevolent friend, Mrs. Beridge, in Derby. He remained in that town a few days, to provide its new inhabitant with a residence to her liking. After bidding her

Digitized by Google

adieu, with much tenderness and anguish of heart, he threw himself into a post-chaise, with his attendant Harry, who exclaimed to his master, as soon as they were off the stones; "I thank God, Sir, you are now got safe out of that town, for I have for many hours been afraid, that I should see you drop down dead, in the midst of it."

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

BOOK THE EIGHTH.

FROM THE SETTLEMENT OF MRS. HAYLEY AT DERBY, IN 1789, TO HER DECEASE AT LONDON, IN 1797.

CHAPTER I.

VARIOUS OCCURRENCES AND COMPOSITIONS IN THE RESIDUE OF THE YEAR 1789, AND IN 1790.

When Hayley had passed through the very painful scene of bidding adieu* to that most pitiable of mortals, with whom he had found it impossible to live, and equally impossible to be indifferent to her welfare; he sought and found some relief to his deeply-agitated heart, in passing a few social and confidential hours with his compassionate friend of Litchfield, Miss Seward, who had observed and pitied the nervous maladies and restless mind of the ill-starred Eliza. The poet anxiously wished to engage his sister of Parnassus, to shew every civility and kindness in her power to that object of his incessant anxiety, whom he had now settled not many miles from the residence of

* This measure seems to have been adopted, in consequence of those constitutional peculiarities with which Mrs. Hayley appears to have been afflicted, as alluded to in other parts of this work, and which Mr. Hayley attributed to the lamented insanity of her mother, at the time of her birth.

Digitized by Google

Seward. An extract from one of his earliest letters to Mrs. Hayley, after their parting, expresses the hopes he entertained on this subject.

"NEWPORT PAGNEL, Saturday Night, *May* 2, 1789.

"In the midst of my light supper of tea, &c., I seize the "traveller's pen, to scribble to you some account of the pilgrim, "from whom I am persuaded you will be kindly solicitous "to hear.

"I reached Litchfield soon after eight, and was so fortunate as "to catch the Muse just returned from an excursion of a few "days. She was pleasant and cordial in the highest degree. "She said every thing kind concerning you, and will probably "write to you very soon. There was a warmth and frank-"ness of regard for us both in her manner, which pleased me "exceedingly, on your account as well as my own: it convinced "me, she will make opportunities of paying her respects to you; "and her society is entertaining in no common degree. Her "poor old father is barely alive, and we thought it best for me "not to see him."

The traveller hastened to his favourite scene of Eartham, after resting a few days in London. Writing from Barnard's Inn, he shews his continual solicitude to amuse the fancy of his Eliza: he says to her,

"*May* 5, 1789.

"Dr. Warner salutes you, and assures you he will never travel "near Derby, without paying his devoirs to you.

Digitized by Google

"I shall beg you and Mrs. Beridge to call upon our friend "Wright, and to tell him from me, that I and all the lovers of "painting with whom I have conversed, since my return to town, "consider his pictures this year, as the very flower of the royal "exhibition. His dying soldier made me literally shed tears; "his moon-light enchanted me."

As soon as Hayley was restored to his own library, he devoted himself to the instruction of his son, and to a plan of the most scrupulous economy, very rarely receiving company, and despatching a weekly letter for the amusement of his distant Eliza. An extract from his letter, of May 31, may serve to shew the quiet tenor of his life at this time.

"My system of economy proceeds as well as I could possibly "expect, and my little companion and I make a pair of as "cheaply-supported hermits, as our country can produce. Our "history is as quiet and simple as can be. We have had no "visitors, but I have had much occupation of late in my medical "character. The farmer has been considerably indisposed, but "is greatly recovered. My poor old paralytic Richard felt the "severe changes of weather, but is now restored to his former "even tranquillity. I have not yet mentioned the worst of my "patients, Harry Hammond, who has been sorely oppressed with "a malady very terrific to a simple peasant, an attack upon the "lungs, so severe, that he frequently thought himself at the last "gasp. I have been so fortunate as to make him almost quite

Digitized by Google

"well again; and the honest fellow, who is firm in his persuasion "that he must have died if I had not attended him very assi-"duously, is full of gratitude and exultation. Tom has had "peculiar pleasure in attending me on these visits."

It was the constant custom of Hayley, while he resided in the little hamlet of Eartham, to supply his rustic neighbours with such medicines as their simple maladies required; and he used to say that he considered himself as highly fortunate in having acted as a village doctor, for more than twenty-five years, without having the least reason to apprehend that he had shortened the life of a single patient. He happened, however, to have a friend on his sick list, in the course of this year, whom he could cure only by sending him back to his more convivial habits of London life.

In June, 1789, the studious and sprightly Dr. Warner, had a fancy to take a lodging, for some months, in the quiet village of his Sussex friend. His project, and his settlement in Eartham, are described in the following extract from the letters of Hayley to his correspondent in Derbyshire.

"*June* 14.

"Tom is highly amused in settling our pleasant divine in his "new quarters. His own plan was to be lodged in the larger "old house, to which he had taken an odd fancy; but as I fore-"saw many inconveniences for him on that system, I have "managed much better for him, I think, in preparing him an "unexpected cell in my gardener's old quarters. That room

Digitized by Google

"having been cleaned and whitewashed, makes a most cheerful "and quiet apartment for a studious hermit; and there the good "doctor is now settling himself, to read and write about ten hours "a day. He threatens to wean himself entirely from his pipe, "and had the magnanimous resolution not to touch it last night "or this morning, though we had prepared his favourite banquet "of tobacco. He is to keep house for himself. I, you know, "have so much of the honest pride of poverty in my nature, that "I am never ashamed of telling any rich persons that I cannot "afford to entertain them. I grow more and more attached to "my plan of rigid economy, and feel more and more encourage-"ment to persevere in a system, which promises to secure to me "the independence in which my spirit exults.

"I am eager to know how our dear Mrs. Beridge likes the "epitaphs. Our London critics say the epitaph of six lines is "the best thing I ever wrote. It is, I believe, a forcible and "faithful description of a man, whose character was early and "very deeply engraved on my heart."

The epitaph so commended, was the tribute that Hayley most cordially devoted to the virtues of his fellow collegian, Dr. Beridge, and it had the good fortune to soothe and gratify the afflicted widow of that very amiable physician. But to return to the divine at Eartham. Dr. Warner, who had infinite friendly enthusiasm in his nature, was so inclined to admire the studious pleasures and the temperance of Hayley, who touched no liquor stronger than coffee, that although the convivial habits of this

Digitized by Google

popular preacher had been very different from those of the Sussex recluse, he now resolved to study with equal or superior perseverance, and to abstain at the same time from wine and tobacco, though both had contributed not a little to his excellent health, and to his florid and comely appearance. His friend remonstrated, but in vain, against a transition so violent in his mode of life. The cheerful enthusiast deserted both his bottle and his pipe; but not with impunity: a low obstinate fever was the consequence of so rash an experiment, and Hayley said, in a letter that described his altered fellow-student, on the 2d of August:

"Alas! this spot, so healthy in general, has not proved so to "him, as he has still his low lurking depressive malady, but I "have sent him I hope the only remedy that I think he requires."

The poet had soon the gratification of hearing, that what he had kindly prescribed, namely, a return to his usual mode of life, among his associates of London, completely restored the health and spirits of this athletic and eloquent divine; whose sermons, when he preached in Eartham, never failed to attract a rural audience more numerous than usual, and an audience that heard him with admiration and delight. It was a source of heartfelt concern to Hayley, that his friend's perseverance in such a new excess of temperance as would not suit his constitution, made him seriously ill; and of course precluded him from perfect enjoyment of a scene congenial to his heart and fancy. As a fellow-student, Warner was pleasant and useful in no common

Digitized by Google

degree. He was a good classical scholar, and perfectly master of the three attractive modern languages, French, Italian, and Spanish. He was also extremely fond of promising little scholars, and shared with Hayley the pleasure of encouraging the studies of the poet's filial disciple. The good-natured divine was almost as fond as the poet himself of the interesting Thomas Alphonso, and as willing to engage in the delightful occupation of acting occasionally both as his preceptor and his play-fellow.

The indisposition and removal of a co-adjutor so sprightly, was a serious trouble to a literary recluse, in a sequestered village; and the more sensibly felt, because the eyes of the poet were still apt to fail him from frequent inflammation; and, of course, derived great advantage from the society of such a friend as Warner, whose rapid pen and powerful voice were ever most willingly employed in assisting a disabled student, who had occasion for their aid.

The ocular infirmity which tormented Hayley, during several years, gave rise to a generous offer from his newly-settled Eliza, towards the close of this autumn.

Although her own health and spirits had greatly suffered from the retirement of Eartham, and although she had the advantage of finding in Derby many social friends, she kindly proposed to return to the studious recluse, for the sake of saving his eyes, by reading to him during the long winter evenings. The reply of Hayley to this affectionate proposal will shew, that from motives of tenderness to the truly pitiable partner of his life, he thought it his duty to persevere in that amicable plan of

Digitized by Google

separation, which he had with so much pain and difficulty at last contrived to accomplish.

"EARTHAM, Sunday, *September* 13, 1789.

"MY DEAR ELIZA,

"Your kind and generous letter affected me with singularly "mixed emotions of pleasure and of pain. Let me first speak "of *yourself*, the most *important personage* in the world, for my "consideration! I feel as gratefully as I ought to do the "extreme kindness of your offer, to dedicate your winter to "reading entirely with the sequestered invalid: but the more I "feel the generosity of such a proposal, the more my heart and "spirit oblige me to decline it. Indeed, nothing could make me "so wretched as the having suffered my infirmities to lead you "into a situation so very ill-suited to your delicate health and "spirits. Recollect, my dear Eliza, how many a winter evening "I have seen you overwhelmed with the dread that you might "lose your eyes, by reading to the sickly hermit, or by weeping "for his misfortunes. The bare recollection of your sufferings "of this nature is painful to me in the extreme; and my sincere "and invariable solicitude for your real good, must prevent me "from incurring the hazard of renewing them. As I have, by a "happy exertion, settled you in the midst of such respectable "and pleasant society as I wish you to enjoy, I should detest "myself if I permitted you, from any kind and useless attention "to me, to forego those promising advantages, which I have so "satisfactorily secured for the tranquillity and amusement of "your life. As to myself, in one particular, you know I resemble

Digitized by Google

" cats, and whenever I am ill, I rather choose to seclude myself
" from my friends, than to court or admit their society. Never,
" I believe, did two persons wish more sincerely to be serviceable
" to each other; but trust me, we can never obtain this end by
" living together, unless Heaven should restore to me the very
" high and lively spirits I once possessed, or make me rich
" enough to support a carriage for you, and all those elegant
" conveniences that can enliven female life in a sequestered
" village. Allow me, therefore, to enjoy the satisfaction I feel,
" in having placed you in a state that I think most conducive to
" your real good; and let us be contented in administering to the
" comfort of each other, in the only way that our very peculiar
" circumstances will allow, I mean, by the frequent intercourse
" of affectionate letters. At a time when I possessed, perhaps,
" some social talents, I devoted my best days to your amuse-
" ment and instruction. Now that many disappointments and
" infirmities have made me fit only for solitude, (for which
" Providence had kindly given me an early passion,) allow me
" to spare you the frequent sight of melancholy alteration, in
" the person with whose gaiety you were formerly entertained;
" and remember that he has always been influenced by romantic
" generosity, in what he gave and what he denied; and that,
" resting on the firm ground of his own good intentions, he is
" naturally firm in his opinions and inflexible, in his conduct. So
" much for your kind proposal, my dear Eliza! which I shall
" ever remember with affectionate gratitude; as I hope you will
" my friendly rejection of what must be inevitably prejudicial

Digitized by Google

" to yourself, and of course extremely painful to me. There are " many reasons against the plan, that I have not time to enlarge " on; such as the chance of my going suddenly abroad, if a " favourable opportunity presented itself, &c. &c.: but the grand " reason I have given, will I trust be sufficient to make you drop " the idea."

A few extracts from Hayley's subsequent letters to the same correspondent, will best explain his fresh hopes of deriving some advantage from the theatre.

" EARTHAM, *October* 14, 1789.

" I was yesterday agreeably surprised by a most polite letter " from Mr. Harris, the manager of Covent Garden, requesting " permission to represent my *Marcella*, for the sake of introducing " a new performer in the part of *Hernandez*. He concludes with " the following very flattering paragraph:"

" 'Another strong motive I have for wishing the representation " of the piece at this theatre, is, the hope that its success might " induce you to turn your attention to the stage.'

" A circumstance with which I was much flattered, in several " conversations I have had with our late esteemed friend, " Mr. Meyer."

It was in the beginning of this year, 1789, that Hayley sustained the loss of this memorable man, with whom he had enjoyed an unclouded friendship of many years, and to whose

Digitized by Google

memory we shall soon find him devoting a singular tribute, by the means of his intercourse with Mr. Harris, of whom he continued to speak as follows, in the letter before cited.

"Though I have too often been duped by managers, to be "very sanguine in my expectation of theatrical riches, yet it "is pleasant to be thus flattered by one of those monarchical "gentlemen; and perhaps, if I have ever health enough to write "a tolerable comedy, I may derive some future advantage from "these overtures of Harris. I have therefore written him a civil "letter, though I was much displeased with his past conduct "towards me. I have given him leave to play *Marcella;* but "I cannot say I think it will succeed, as he expects."

Again,

"*October* 21, 1789.

"Now for Harris. I had written a long letter in answer "to his polite application, and begged him, if he was sincere in "his flattering wishes to draw my muse repeatedly on the stage, "to pass a day or two in my hermitage, that we might converse "on various dramatic plans. I said also, that nothing would give "me so much pleasure, as to produce at his Theatre our ill-"treated German Opera, and apply half the author's profits to "raise, in Kew church, an elegant monument worthy of the "admirable artist, and most benevolent man, who imported, and "was so kindly anxious to produce that performance. Much "more I said: but hear part of his delightful reply! I will trans-"scribe a few paragraphs of his letter. After his polite excuse,

Digitized by Google

"and regret at not being able to accept my invitation, he "says; 'As I shall be most happy to aid your benevolent "purpose respecting our late worthy friend, pray let me again "read, and consider the opera you mention. I shall regard it "as one of the most fortunate events of my mimic life, if I can "fairly bring you to a determination of being a *dramatic author*; "I mean for *the stage*, which certainly holds out much greater "rewards of fame, delight, and profit, than any other species of "literary composition; and I trust you will allow me *here* an "opportunity of completing my design upon you, the first time "you visit London.'

"After twenty years of dramatic disappointment, it is certainly "pleasant to be so flattered by a manager. It may, in the end, "be better than mere flattery; as Shakspeare says,

"'There is a tide in the affairs of men,
"'That taken at the flood leads on to fortune.'

"I will not lose this appearance of a most unexpected and "prosperous tide, by any negligence of my own; and let us hope "that, after much theatrical mortification, some theatrical delight "and profit may yet be in store for us! I need not tell you, that "whenever my purse prospers, you will surely be the better for "it. Adieu.

"Ever your affectionate H."

The poet had the cordial gratification which he was so anxious to obtain, in making the German Opera, by which Meyer had so kindly endeavoured to improve the finances of his

Digitized by Google

poetical friend, contribute to the sepulchral honours of that memorable artist. Hayley having new modelled the opera, and reduced it to an afterpiece, sold it to Mr. Harris for 100*l.* intending to expend that sum on a monument to his friend; but the tender liberality of Mrs. Meyer, would only permit the poet to take an equal share with herself in the expense of the sculpture, which was executed from a design of Mr. George Dance, by a sculptor named Hickley, at the price of 100*l.* The drama was represented under its new title, *The Trial of the Rock;* but without the popularity that Hayley expected from the new characters he had introduced, and the compliment made to the brave defenders of Gibraltar, which made a part of the new scenery. All the dramatic productions of Hayley seemed to be thwarted by the influence of an evil star. The attempt made by the actors of Drury-Lane, to prevent the success of his *Marcella,* at Covent-Garden, is one of the most remarkable incidents to be found in theatrical history.

The reader may probably be amused by the following extracts from letters to Mrs. H., that relate to this subject.

"EARTHAM, *November* 8, 1789.

"I shall not postpone my expedition beyond Thursday, at "farthest, as *Marcella* is to be played on Saturday at Covent-"Garden. Apropos of *Marcella!* Long's letter contains a most "surprising piece of intelligence, that *Marcella* was to be played "as *last night* at Drury-Lane. This is curious indeed; after "having shut me out of their two houses for twenty years, to

Digitized by Google

" see the managers contending with each other, in representing " a tragedy of mine! But I think the play announced at Drury-" Lane, can hardly be *my Marcella*. There may be another of " the same name, for (to borrow an expression from the lively " dramatist, Mrs. Centlivre,) I do not pretend to engross all the " *Marcellas* in the world; but of this I will write you word, " when I know more myself."

Again,

"BARNARD'S-INN, Saturday, *November* 15, 1789.

" Here I am at last; and I thank you for the kind and com-" fortable letter I found on my arrival. A severe inflammation " of the eyes, united to some disagreeable dramatic news, from " Drury-Lane, prevented my setting forth till yesterday. Never " was any thing more strange or illiberal, than the conduct " of the Drury managers, respecting my poor *Marcella*. They " seem to have played it only on a few hours' preparation, " to get the start of Harris, and prevent his success by having " the play damned in their own theatre. Long and Romney, " who were at Drury-Lane on the Saturday, say, nothing could " be more infamous than their mode of exhibiting the piece: " but on the Tuesday following, as you have seen in the papers, " *Marcella*, in spite of her premature supposed death, revived, " and triumphed at Covent-Garden. On my arrival last night, I " was hurried, perforce, to the theatre, and saw my dwarfish tra-" gedy played indeed most admirably, but to a house rather thin; " it was received, however, with unchequered applause; and will " be occasionally repeated; but, as I told Harris this morning,

Digitized by Google

"it is not calculated to be a popular play. He is very angry at "the base treatment he received from the rival house, and the "more so, as Sheridan had promised, when he applied to him on "the subject, that he would prevent the unworthy manœuvre "he apprehended.

"So much for dramatic matters, in which you know, I have "had *twenty years' seasoning*, to make me a *sound philosopher;* "and, in truth, no events of this kind can wound me deeply."

Again,

"*December* 4, 1789.

"Marcella has done me some essential service, by rendering "me personally acquainted with Harris, who appears to me at "present a courteous gentleman in his conduct. You will be "pleased to hear, that I have the fairest prospect of producing "a play at Covent-Garden, in the course of the season. What "it is I think you had better not know, till I am able to inform "you of its fate. I am this moment interrupted by the pleasant "Carwardine; we dined together with the chancellor. Romney "was with us, and the day was as pleasant as we could wish."

Though mixing occasionally with the best society of London, Hayley was eager to regain his favourite retirement, and he did so before the close of the year.

His next letter is from Eartham.

"*December* 9, 1789.

"My dear Eliza,

"I seize the first post after my return, because I know you "will rejoice to hear that I arrived here in safety last night,

Digitized by Google

" and had the comfort of finding the dear boy in perfect health
" I supported the various troubles of my dramatic adventures
" in London, with better health and spirits than I could have
" expected from my shattered frame; and I think I accomplished
" great things, in my dealings with the mighty mock monarchs
" of the theatre, as I induced the manager of Covent-Garden
" to receive a new play in the most gracious manner, and the
" manager of Drury Lane to ask my pardon for having offended me.
" In the hurry of my London life, I forget whether I informed
" you, that I resolved to call on Kemble (who is the manager
" of Drury Lane) for an explanation of his strange conduct in
" producing my poor Marcella, in a manner so very unfair, and
" so utterly disgraceful to the tragedy and to himself. My
" adventures in this business would furnish some good scenes for
" a comedy; but they concluded with a very full, candid, and
" flattering apology, which put me into perfect good humour
" with this great theatrical offender.

" My present connexion with the manager of the other house
" will call me again to London, in about three, four, or five
" weeks, as contingencies may turn out."

A few brief extracts from the remaining letters of the year will shew how severely the heart of Hayley was agitated, by unexpected affliction for one of his early friends.

" *December* 23.

" I never was more painfully affected than by surprise and
" apprehension, from Clyfford's horrible relapse. To have the

Digitized by Google

"last of my three most intimate college friends in imminent "danger, appeared a most bitter destiny for a poor invalid, who "ought, in the common course of probabilities, to have departed "for Heaven long before any one of these invaluable friends, "whom it is so painful to survive. But, thank Heaven, there is "some comfortable hope from my last intelligence."

"*December* 26, LONDON, 1789.

"Alas! the intelligence mentioned in my last was too flat-"tering. Our friend's illness grew more and more alarming. I "flew up to catch a last sight of him, and arrived yesterday "evening, a few hours before he expired.

"His wife is almost petrified by this untimely fate of a man "so likely, and so deserving, to live. My own sensations you will "easily conceive, from knowing my long regard for him. I bless "Heaven, however, that I had the mournful satisfaction of see-"ing him alive. He made an effort to shake my hand, but "could not speak to me."

"EARTHAM, *December* 30, Wednesday.

"You will be anxious to hear that the mournful and weary "traveller is safe again at home. I reached my own house last "night, as I left it on Friday morn, in a tempest of wind and rain, "that suited the gloominess of my troubled heart much better "than sunshine.

"Poor Sir David! I feel the untimely, unexpected loss of him "very bitterly; but I trust a few day's rest in my own quiet

Digitized by Google

" library will enable me to calm my troubled spirits, and to
" recover the power of employing my mind on other subjects,
" which I do not possess at present.

" I had the comfort of finding the dear boy perfectly well, and
" most sweetly disposed to soothe and amuse the tired traveller
" in the gentlest and most affectionate manner."

The cordial sorrow that Hayley felt in losing his warm-hearted friend Clyfford, in the prime of life, prepared him probably to support with the more philosophy the lighter misfortune of seeing his hopes of honour and emolument from the theatre suddenly blasted. His Tragedy of *Eudora* was represented towards the end of January, 1790, but without the success that the friends of the poet thought it almost sure of obtaining. As he has himself related his reasons for withdrawing the play after a single representation, in a preface to the three Tragedies, which he published in 1811, it will here be sufficient to say, that no author could support such a disappointment with a more philosophical cheerfulness of spirit. He sat with his friend Romney in one of the upper boxes, on the first night of the play. They were charmed with the admirable acting of Mrs. Pope, in the Heroine of the Tragedy; but so disgusted with the wretched manner, in which some important parts of the scenical apparatus were rendered ridiculous, that Hayley determined to withdraw his drama from the theatre immediately.

He returned speedily to Sussex, and a few sentences from his first letter to Derby may serve to shew how he supported this recent trial.

Digitized by Google

"EARTHAM, *February* 8, 1790.

"MY DEAR ELIZA,

"You will be glad to hear that the luckless poet is safely "returned to his favourite retirement, and with a serenity of "spirit not often preserved, they tell me, on similar occasions; but "it would be unpardonable indeed, if the author, who has pre-"sumed to give poetical lessons for the preservation of temper, "were not able on such a trial to preserve his own. I had the "comfort and delight of finding the dear boy perfectly well, and "so happy in my return, that had Spleen attended me on my "journey, (which in truth she did not,) his sweet little smiling "face would have banished her completely."

The continual employment of Hayley, first, in conducting the education of his highly promising boy; secondly, in planning and beginning new literary works, in poetry and prose; and lastly, his unfailing attention to all the inhabitants of his little village, who happened to suffer from any illness, so filled up all his time, that he was perfectly secured against that *tædium vitæ*, which i apt to steal upon a sequestered student. The cordial interest that he took in the health of his rustic neighbours is strikingly exemplified in the following letter. The farmer, of whom it speaks, was at that time the only farmer who resided in the village: he was a man of infinite good-nature, and of stature so majestic, that Mrs. Hayley, who had been familiar with him from her childhood, when her father, the Dean, officiated as the minister of the parish, used sportively to call him Agamemnon; a cir-

Digitized by Google

cumstance that rendered the following account of him peculiarly interesting to that lady.

"EARTHAM, *April* 11, 1790.

"Though it can but little surprise, it will be some grief to "you to hear, that our honest good-humoured farmer is at length "departed. He expired in the course of last night, and so "easily, that I believe he was not himself aware of his ap-"proaching death; and the person who watched in his chamber "had not time to call me to comfort him, as I wished to do, in "his last moments.

"I have had, however, the great satisfaction of making his "latter days of debility and alarm much less grievous to him than "they would have been had I not been at home. I have gene-"rally visited him twice a day, and have always hastened to him "on every alarm, which the frequent discharge of blood from "his lungs had occasioned. You know he had ever a great aver-"sion for medicine and medical folks. His dislike to doctors "seemed rather to increase than diminish; but in proportion to "his dislike, his confidence and consolation in my attention to "him grew more and more striking as his malady advanced. "In the course of the last week, he expressed his gratitude "to me in the warmest and most affecting language.

"It has been a very touching spectacle to behold so manly, "so robust, and so noble a frame torn to pieces by an incurable "disorder, so long before the season that nature seemed to in-"tend. His mind for a long time appeared more attached to

Digitized by Google

"life than I expected to see it; but in the few last days, he "began to wish for a release; and Heaven has granted that wish "in the most merciful manner. You will easily believe, that "this recent event has thrown a gloom over our little village, "which nature herself seems to share, in the unseasonable se-"verity of the weather. Adieu."

The next letter contains a remarkable incident, and shews a little scholar, not yet ten years old, improving, by critical sagacity, the verses of his father.

"EARTHAM, *April* 18, 1790.

"The dear little man continues completely well, and has been "trying to amuse you by transcribing, for our packet to-day, the "epitaph which I have given to the son of the honest farmer, "who seems highly pleased with this little mark of my sincere "esteem for the genuine simple virtues of his father. My little "companion does not outstep the line of truth in saying he had "a hand in it. The fact is, I had written *two* epitaphs; one of "eight lines, the other of two. The dear little critic very cle-"verly suggested the idea of taking the best parts of each, and "melting them into what we have now produced."

The feelings of Hayley were such, that it was hardly possible for him to be an assiduous attendant on the lingering decay of a strong and worthy man, whom he regarded, without suffering in his own person. That he had done so in some degree, is confessed in the opening of his next letter to Mrs. H.

Digitized by Google

"LONDON, *April* 26, 1790.

"Finding that I wanted something to counteract the impres-
"sion which the late melancholy scenes in my retirement had
"made on my mind and health, I have taken a trip to the great
"city. A vehement desire to see the progress of Romney's im-
"portant picture from the Tempest of Shakspeare, and to pay
"a visit long promised to the pleasant and friendly Carwardine,
"has drawn me from my hermitage; from which, however, I
"shall not be long absent, as I have left my little disciple to
"preside in my study."

The two subsequent omitted letters, described the pleasure which the poet enjoyed, in finding his highly valued friend Carwardine, enjoying many domestic and ecclesiastical comforts, in his priory of Earls Colne, in Essex. The visit was a mutual delight to the two friends, who were ever highly pleased with the society of each other; and it produced an event not less gratifying to the young student, whom Hayley had left as the guardian of his library; and of whom he thus spoke on the 13th June, 1790.

"The dear boy is well, and peculiarly delighted with the new
"kind of present I brought him, namely a playfellow of his own
"age, and of a very sweet disposition; a son of my pleasant
"friend Carwardine, who is come with me to pay Tom as long a
"visit, as I may think conducive to the improvement and hap-
"piness of the two little friends, who are at present highly

Digitized by Google

"charmed with the society of each other. I take great delight "in the contemplation of their friendship, which has all the "sweetness and all the ardour of youthful affection. Henry "(who is, for his age, a considerable proficient in drawing) "teaches Tom the use of the pencil, and Tom in return, is a sort "of language-master to Henry."

It was the great and continual object of Hayley's solicitude and ambition, to mould the mind and manners of his son to the greatest advantage, as appears by the incessant care which his father bestowed on his domestic education.

To supply a son with fellow-students, and play-fellows suited to his age, the poet received under his roof, two sons of his much-esteemed friend, Mr. Carwardine, with whom, and their favourite artist Romney, he had projected an excursion, in the autumn of this year, to contemplate the extraordinary scenes then passing at Paris, and to survey the works of art, in that interesting city. Hayley had another motive for a visit to France. As it was his intention at this time, to prepare his son to excel as a physician, he wished him to learn betimes to speak the language of France, as well as his own; and the anxious parent hoped to find some good sensible Frenchwoman, in an humble state, who might be content, for a moderate salary, to act as a sort of governess to the youths, whom he was training in classical literature.

The projects of Hayley were generally formed in all the ardour of benevolence; and often with more zeal than discretion

Digitized by Google

For his idea of a foreign governess, he was rallied not a little by his friends, who thought the scheme very romantic, and very unlikely to succeed. He had, however, the satisfaction of accomplishing his design; and of seeing his son derive from it all the advantage that his sanguine fancy had expected. But it is now proper to mention at what time, and in what manner, the aforesaid trio, the priest, the painter, and the poet, set forth together on their travels. Carwardine arrived at Eartham in a post-coach, purchased for the party on this occasion. Romney was then paying his customary annual visit in Sussex; and on Saturday, the 31st of July, the travellers proceeded to Brighton, and by Dieppe to Paris, which they reached on Tuesday evening, August the 3d. As Hayley wished to form a sketch of this memorable excursion of pleasure, in a series of letters to a friend, it will be sufficient here to say, that after enjoying three weeks, in all the diversions of Paris, and having received the most obliging civilities from many eminent persons, both of their own country and of France, they were happily restored again to the tranquillity of Eartham, and brought with them the pleasant and useful little Frenchwoman, of whose good qualities Hayley has made just and grateful mention, in a life of his son. We have yet to notice the course of the Poet's literary productions. A few brief occasional poems he composed in Paris; and they will of course appear in the letters that describe his visit to that city. In the summer immediately preceding that excursion, he wrote a musical drama, in three acts, entitled *The Resolute Fair; or, The Courage of Love.* I will close the chapter by an

Digitized by Google

ticipated relation of the various mischances that befel this Opera, in different periods: for like other dramatic compositions of the author, it appeared to have arisen under the influence of unfavourable stars. It was approved for the theatre, since in a copy of it the names of the intended actors appear marked with a pencil, by the manager of Covent-Garden; but as the principal incident of the piece is the restoration of a Javanese Sultan from deep melancholy, by the songs of a fair musician, it was apprehended an injudicious audience might suppose this circumstance to be a disrespectful allusion to the mental malady of our Sovereign. It was, therefore, very properly determined not to hazard its representation. At the distance of several years, the author made some alterations in the dialogue, and was preparing to print it with other plays, when a severe relapse of the King made him again apprehend it might yet hurt the feelings of his Majesty's affectionate attendants; and although it was rather a favourite work of its author, he resolved to forego the gratification of seeing it in print, rather than expose himself to any hazard of being supposed to have alluded indelicately to the mental calamity of his Sovereign.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER II.

OCCURRENCES AND COMPOSITIONS OF THE YEARS 1791 AND 1792.

In the first month of the year 1791, Hayley employed himself in a very arduous literary attempt, that discovered his very strong passion for the theatre, and perhaps an equal degree of presumptuous vanity. He began a comedy in the French language, and in five acts; and having finished it before the end of February, amused his fancy with the idea of having it acted in Paris, with the aid of his very zealous friend Dr. Warner, who was still residing as chaplain to the English Ambassador in that city. Warner and Hayley had each of them no inconsiderable share of philanthropy and enthusiasm. They had exulted together in the destruction of the Bastile; and had cherished ideas concerning the progress of public felicity in France, that did more honour to their benevolence than to their political foresight. But the sensations and expressions of the French people, during the few weeks that Hayley passed in their country, had produced a very cheerful effect on his heart, and made him fervently wish that the delight which thousands of joyous and well-meaning mortals were at that time displaying, on having burst the rusty fetters of inveterate despotism, might happily settle into the rational and sober hilarity of a free nation.

Digitized by Google

Hayley was so full of this sanguine philanthropic hope, on his return from France, that he began a prose work, projected as a reply to the intemperate invective of Mr. Burke. But happily, perhaps, for his own peace of mind, as soon as he had written three or four pages, in the commencement of his intention, a domestic trouble obliged him to throw the work aside, and hasten to London with a young invalid, whom he was most anxious to restore to his tender and amiable parents. The health of that sweet-tempered youth, Henry Carwardine, had been so deeply affected, that Hayley was painfully alarmed for his future welfare, and though delighted with the juvenile friendship between Henry and his son, (who used to rehearse scenes of Shakspeare together, and particularly the quarrel and reconciliation of Brutus and Cassius, in a manner to excite the most cordial applause,) yet felt it necessary to relinquish his favourite project of superintending, for a few years, the social studies of his young fellow-students.

As his friend, the divine of Essex, happened to be too much engaged to reach the south, Hayley, in his solicitude for the sick youth, conveyed him to London, in December, 1790, though he was himself far from well at the time, and by his travels so increased a feverish indisposition, that he was forced to put himself under the discipline of his medical favourite, Dr. Austin, who sent him home again, before the close of the year, with a bottle of bark, as his travelling companion.

The medicines of his friend, and the quiet of his own library, so effectually restored and inspirited his mind, that instead of

Digitized by Google

resuming the prose essay, which he had only just begun, he commenced, on the 15th of January, the more arduous enterprise already mentioned, the composition of a French drama. The main purpose of this play was similar to that of the benevolent French dramatist Favert in his *L'Anglois à Bourdeaux*, although in the persons and the plot of the two dramas there is no similarity.

The very first speech in the play of Hayley, expressly shews the philanthropic wish of the two authors. An English gentleman called Mr. Trumore, and the son of an old Peer, most outrageously prejudiced against the French, is discovered reading in his library, and opens the drama, by reciting the following verses of Favert, with his comment upon them;

Esclave né d'un goût national,
Vous êtes toujours partial;
N'admettez plus des maximes contraires!
Et, comme moi, voyez d'un oeil égal
Tous les hommes, qui sont nos frères;
J'ai detesté toujours un préjugé fatal.

Charmant Auteur! Que vous m'inspirez de l'estime pour votre nation aimable et généreuse. Vivent à jamais les écrivains qui par la douce magie d'un esprit vif et tendre, tachent d'anéantir ces hideux déstructeurs du bonheur humain, la haine, et l'hostilité nationale!

The heroine of the play is a French damsel, *la tendre Emilie*, who coming to England inquest of an old persecuted father, and falling into indigence, is virtuously assisted by Trumore; and by her own magnanimity, and that of her discovered parent,

Digitized by Google

makes a convert of Trumore's father, the outrageous old lord, and justifies the title of the drama. *Les préjugés abolis, ou l' Anglois juste envers les François.*

The sanguine spirit of Hayley had imagined it possible for his very active and zealous friend Warner, the chaplain of the English embassy, to introduce this bold and benevolent attempt of a foreigner into one of the many Parisian theatres.

The drama was thought interesting, though it had much more pathos than humour. The reason why it was rejected appeared to the author more truly comic, than any speech in his comedy. It was inadmissible on account of the chastity of the Parisian theatres. The author had introduced, among his secondary characters, a courtezan, and the delicacy of France could not tolerate any personage confessedly destitute of continence. So ended his brief vision of dramatic success in a foreign land. But on this occasion, as on many others, he had much to console him, in the active benevolence and sympathy of a few intimate friends. The adventurous dramatist had been seasoned by so many theatrical disappointments, that he could hardly expect or wish for any emolument from his singular attempt; and the following passage from one of his letters to Mrs. H. at this period, may serve to shew, that he was perfectly aware how dangerous it is to confide in the precarious profits of the pen. The passage alluded to is a curious picture of his domestic economy, and his solicitude to keep himself completely independent, in spite of many mischances.

Digitized by Google

"EARTHAM, *January* 26, 1791.

"As I find that economy is the only thing that a spirit so "independent as mine can safely trust, in regard to this world, "I am growing a minute economist, in respect to my household; "keeping no footman, and only two diminutive maids. By this "reduction, and by denying myself the expensive amusement of "visiting London, I hope to accomplish the grand and necessary "object of living within my little revenue. The sacrifices that "I make to honest pride, are never (thank Heaven) painful to my "spirit, and I consider poverty itself as a robe of honour, when "it is gracefully decorated with the jewel independence."

Notwithstanding his just sense of economy, and his resolutions to practise that guardian virtue, Hayley was this year induced, by motives of health, to incur such an expense, as might otherwise have been thought a striking act of extravagance. He purchased a cottage with all its furniture and a little garden, in the marine village of Felpham. That village had been long endeared to the fancy of the poet, by the circumstance of his having frequently lodged in it in his youth, with his inestimable mother, when she visited the coast for the sake of sea-bathing. He was also attached to Felpham, as a favourite scene of his highly-valued friend Mr. Steele, whom Hayley had attended with filial affection on the night of his decease. Though Felpham was not the settled residence of that worthy magistrate, he had taken great delight in forming a little villa there, in which

Digitized by Google

Hayley had often enjoyed his society. The injured health of the poet, and the severe head-aches that he felt after any great affliction, induced him to consider his marine cottage as the best of remedies for his infirmity; and it afforded him also the most convenient opportunities for teaching his son to swim, a point which he had much at heart, to preserve him from accidental danger, and to strengthen his delicate constitution. For these purposes, as the summer advanced, he made it a custom to pass two nights every week by the sea-side. The easy rides on horse-back, from Eartham to Felpham, and the return to the former scene, after an early plunge in the sea, contributed not a little to the health and pleasure of the tender father and his young disciple. I am not able to discover what was the next extensive composition which employed the pen of Hayley, after he had despatched his French drama to Paris. His letters to Derby do not speak of any considerable work, but chiefly dwell on his paternal feelings, in preparing to send his little fellow-student from home, on a long journey to the north, that he might enjoy a visit of several weeks to Mrs. Hayley, who was tenderly anxious to receive him, and to contribute as much as possible to the pleasures and the improvements best suited to the age of the highly-promising boy, now in his eleventh year. He had so profited by the instructions of his foreign teacher, that he spoke and wrote French with facility. Having derived all the advantage that his father wished from the lively little foreigner, he escorted her to London, on her road to a family in Monmouthshire, where she had been recommended to a new eligible situation; and after rendering

Digitized by Google

her all the kind offices which she had so well deserved from him, he pursued his own journey to Derby.

The following passage from a letter of Mrs. H. will shew how eagerly and how kindly the young traveller was expected and wished for.

"DERBY, *September* 10, 1791.

"As you name the 23d., as the probable day on which the "dear boy is to arrive in Derby, I hope it will not be inconve-"nient to you to suffer him to come to me some days sooner, "when I tell you my wishes, which I flatter myself you will "enter into. The archers and archeresses assemble at the Kid-"dleston Inn, once in every month. The former shoot for small "prizes, the latter only for honour. The Pigots, and many of "my friends are members, and I have been much invited to dine "in this party; but I have always put off the scheme for the arri-"val of Thomas, believing it the very pleasantest entertainment I "have in store for him. The next meeting is appointed for "Tuesday the 27th. I, therefore, wish him to arrive near a week "before that day, that we may make the due preparations.

"You will equip him with a proper bow and arrows, and I "desire to have the honour of presenting him with a green coat, "on which I shall work a golden arrow, and put the buttons of "the Derby archers. The waistcoat also, which is to be buff, "with a simple laurel leaf in ribbon, (as I have been wont to "work for you and your friends,) will take also a little time; "therefore, if you could spare him towards the end of next

Digitized by Google

" week, I should be glad. And now for the conveyance. After " thorough inquiry, I am assured by all, that the mail, of all the " stages, is the safest and best."

The visit, so anxiously expected, was happily accomplished, to the high gratification of all parties. But the pleasures arising from it were overclouded by illness; an alarming obstruction in the intestines put the life of Mrs. H. in danger; but she was relieved by the great skill and equal kindness of her poetical physician, Dr. Darwin, whose conduct in attending her was truly that of a gentleman and a friend. It will be paying a just tribute to the memory of the departed, to transcribe from a letter, written just after her recovery, a passage in which she speaks of her young visitor's tenderness on this occcasion in the following words.

" Tom shewed a solicitude for me during my illness, that " pleased my friends extremely. The day before, and on his " birth-day, he said to Mrs. Beridge, he thought it would be best " not to *tell me of the day*, as it might hurry me. Indeed his " general attention to every body, and his application and skill " at whatever he attempts, gain him universal love and appro- " bation. We shall all grieve when the time comes that we " must part."

Hayley had found that it required the exertion of all his philosophical fortitude, to send the tender nursling, over whom he had brooded almost incessantly from his birth, on so distant

Digitized by Google

an excursion, and to support for many weeks the absence of a darling associate, whose studies and amusements seemed to be all that could inspirit the life of the sequestered poet, whose parental feelings formed the happiest part of his existence. He was, however, most willing to sacrifice a part of his own highest enjoyment, to promote the pleasure and the reciprocal affection of two beings, very singularly dear to him. He permitted the young traveller to remain with his kind hostess at Derby, till the beginning of November, when he hoped to meet him in London, and escort him to their favourite scenes, the library and garden of Eartham. In the interim, the chief occupation of Hayley seems to have been that of writing long letters to Derby. From these the following extracts may prove not uninteresting, as they relate to persons of literary eminence.

"EARTHAM, *October* 19, 1791.

"I am delighted to hear, that our admirable brother of Par-
"nassus has pleased you so highly in his medical capacity. If
"you have taken a copy of his epitaph on Mrs. French, pray let
"Tom transcribe it for me, as I think highly both of his subject,
"and of his powers of celebration. Mrs. French, without the
"brilliant understanding, and, perhaps, without the exquisite
"sensibility of her sister, Mrs. Nicholas, had an interesting
"tenderness of character, like the painting of Corregio; and,
"perhaps, a woman never existed who possessed in a higher de-
"gree the invaluable power to tranquillize and sweeten human
"life. A-propos of admirable women! Let me speak of one
"admirable in a very different point of view, I mean the exqui-

Digitized by Google

" site French authoress, Madame Sillery. She has just had the " kindness to send me, with her new publication, a very pretty " drawing from the pencil of Pamela, the lovely girl whom she " educates with her princely disciples. Her book is in two octavo " volumes, and most singular in its nature; it is entitled 'Leçons " d'une Gouvernante à ses Elèves, où Fragmens d'un Journal qui " a été fait pour l'éducation des Enfans de Monsieur d'Orléans.' " It is a detail of all her minute attention to the children, and of " her late misunderstanding with the Duchess; a book in which " her enemies will find much to gratify their malice, and her " friends still more to justify their regard."

" EARTHAM, *November* 6, 1791.

" MY DEAR ELIZA,

" I promised you another letter to-day, but I have only " the tragi-comic history of a grand and ludicrous disappoint- " ment for the subject of my epistle.

" I had flattered myself, when I mentioned extraordinary " visitors, that I might soon be able to entertain you with a cheer- " ful account of some illustrious guests, whom I expected the " honour of receiving in my hermitage; but the stormy weather, " I apprehend, has induced them to change the course of their " expedition; and I have utterly relinquished my expectation of " seeing them. I had received a kind billet from that enchanting " French authoress, Madame Sillery, to tell me she was going " to Bath, with Mademoiselle d'Orleans, two other young ladies, " and a French patriot, whom I particularly wished to see, as a

Digitized by Google

" man of singular public spirit and unblemished integrity. She
" told me it was their design not to see London, but strike across
" the country, from Dover to Brighton, to visit Portsmouth, and
" the Isle of Wight, and proceed through Salisbury to Bath, and
" catch a sight of me in the course of their journey. She de-
" sired me to write to her, directing my letter to be left at the
" post-house, Dover: but, alas! her billet containing this request
" did not reach me till two days after the time when she had said
" she should arrive at Dover, and of course it was not possible for
" my reply to catch the travellers *there*, if they were punctual in
" their time; I therefore despatched two billets, in the hope of
" surprising them on their road, one to Brighton, another to
" Arundel; and in all the laughable fuss of a *little recluse* pre-
" paring to receive *great folks of the world*, I began to collect
" what I could for the entertainment of guests, to whom I was so
" anxious to express, in the best way in my power, my gratitude
" for the very engaging civilities that I received from them in
" France. One day of expectation followed another, but no
" visitors appeared. I now conclude the tempestuous weather
" obliged them to change this plan; and as my foreign friend
" received from me no letter at Dover, according to her request,
" she might reasonably conclude that I was not in the country.
" As I love to look with the eye of a philosopher on the bright
" side of all *vexatious events*, I now console myself with the idea
" that I have not now to regret (what I should have regretted
" undoubtedly, had my visitors arrived) the mortification our *dear*
" *little Frenchman* would have felt in not being at home to pay

Digitized by Google

"his devoirs to a sweet little princess of the blood royal of "France, and what gives her a better title to esteem, full of ten-"der sensibility, with a noble mind, and many graceful accom-"plishments. She enchanted me by her attachment to her "admirable governess, which was so strong, that it almost "cost her her life when they were on the point of being "separated."

A series of perverse incidents precluded Hayley from a sight of these friendly French ladies, during their stay in this island; but he ever retained a truly grateful sense of the many obliging proofs of regard which he received from them in France, and never ceased to take a delight in the succession of interesting publications from the pen of the instructive and pathetic authoress.

The poet of Eartham hastened to London towards the end of November, to meet his filial disciple from the north; and after indulging themselves in a few visits to the Theatre together, the happily re-united travellers hastened back, before the close of the year, to their favourite scene of social study. Part of the first letter after their arrival in Sussex may serve to shew the domestic character of Hayley.

"Sunday, *December* 25, 1791.

"My dear Eliza,

"We are safely returned to our hermitage, but our return "is grievously overclouded by domestic sorrow; we found our "little household in tears. The poor feeling gardener had but "an hour or two before our arrival buried that fine lovely boy,

Digitized by Google

"his second son. A malignant fever and sore throat (caught "from their school in the neighbouring village) had almost "proved fatal to the eldest. He, however, struggled through "it; but the infectious malady seized his younger brother, and "rapidly put an end to his more tender life. Many little circum-"stances (very touching to hearts of sensibility) have given "peculiar poignancy to this domestic affliction. The poor lost "little fellow used to call himself Tom's little man, and exulted "in the prospect of his return from the north.

"One of the reasons that induced me to give up a tempting "invitation to Stourhead, where I was pressed to meet Madame "Sillery and her lovely female disciples, was, the idea that as "sickness had invaded this little village, my presence here would "be particularly useful to the honest creatures around me; and "to find that I arrived too late was painful in the extreme, espe-"cially as the afflicted parents are persuaded their child would "have been saved had their master been at home. Poor Thomas, "who has all the keen feelings of a father, is beginning to revive; "and I have in some degree diverted his thoughts from his own "affliction, by employing him as messenger to poor old Nurse, "who is fallen into grievous trouble of various kinds. I must "visit her at Petworth to-morrow, as I was unable to see her on "my return, being obliged to travel the Midhurst road, for the "sake of comforting poor William, who is likewise in trouble "from an apprehension of losing his turnpike-gate, which I hope "to prevent.

"In return for this history of my poor dependents, pray give

Digitized by Google

" me a happier account of yourself. The dear boy is well, and
" speaks to you in French for himself.

" The Sargents have been very kind to poor old Nurse.
" Adieu. I will give you an early account of the various poor
" folks that I am endeavouring to serve and comfort in their
" respective distresses."

We have now reached the year 1792, a memorable era in the life of Hayley, as he became in that year the intimate friend of Cowper, and the Biographer of Milton. Before we relate occurrences that conduced so much to his social delight and literary reputation, it may be not improper to observe, that in the commencement of this year 1792, the tender feelings of Hayley were much affected by the departure of the singularly good old woman, whom he had long loved and revered as his nurse. He thus speaks of her in a letter to Mrs. H.:

" EARTHAM, January 15, 1792.

" I would not add a line to the last letter of your dear little
" correspondent, because I would not overcloud the lively history
" that he gave you of his dance at Lady Newburgh's, with a
" gloomy mention of my dear old departed Nurse, the tidings of
" whose death arrived here about an hour after the little dancer
" set forth for his ball; so chequered is the scene of this world!
" I felt particularly comforted in having had one very pleasing
" interview with her, before she lost her senses, in the stupor
" that preceded her death.

Digitized by Google

"I could not resist my strong desire to take a last look at the "honest countenance that had smiled on me so often through "the various periods of my life, before it was consigned to the "grave; and as Tom had often expressed a curious inclination "to see a corpse, I took him with me in my melancholy visit to "the dear dead old woman. I had often promised my literary "Nurse, as she was so fond of poetry, to write her epitaph, and "I have kept my word as you will see by the enclosed."

The following inscription is engraved on a tombstone in the church-yard of Petworth; a little tribute from the affection of her master to the virtues of this excellent mortal.

In memory
of Sarah Betts, widow,
who passed near 50 years in one service,
and died January 2, 1792,
aged 75.

Farewell! dear servant! since thy Heavenly Lord
Summons thy worth to its supreme reward.
Thine was a spirit that no toil could tire,
"When service sweat for duty, not for hire."
From him whose childhood cherished by thy care,
Weathered long years of sickness and despair,
Take what may haply touch the blest above,
Truth's tender praise! and tears of grateful love.

Before we take a final leave of this good woman, let me say, that her poet had two admirable sketches of her head in water colorus, which were favourite ornaments of his house; the first,

Digitized by Google

drawn from the life, by his friend Romney, at Eartham; the second, most admirably copied by the young artist, Thomas Hayley. The portrait, in each delineation, possesses all the spirit and dignity of an ancient sibyl.

In February, Hayley gave the following account of two agreeable guests, to his correspondent in Derby:

"Our hermitage has been enlivened in the course of the last "week, by a visit from our cheerful friend Dr. Warner, and a "very amiable American poet, (Barlow) for whom he has the "highest regard.

"They stayed only three nights; but we could not well expect "to enjoy their society longer, as they are both preparing to "take their leave of this island for some time. Our American "brother of Parnassus returns to the new world; and his fellow-"traveller, to rejoin the English Ambassador in France."

It happened, that when the benevolent enthusiast, Dr. Warner, arrived at Eartham, Hayley had been induced, by some paragraphs in a newspaper, to write the following letter and sonnet to the poet of Weston:

"*February* 7, 1792, EARTHAM, near Chichester.

"DEAR SIR,

"I have often been tempted by affectionate admiration of "your poetry, to trouble you with a letter; but I have repeatedly "checked myself, in recollecting that the vanity of believing "ourselves distantly related in spirit to a man of genius, is "but a sorry apology for intruding on his time.

Digitized by Google

"Though I resisted my desire of professing myself your friend, "that I might not disturb you with intrusive familiarity, I cannot "resist a desire equally affectionate, of disclaiming an idea which I "am told is imputed to me, of considering myself, on a recent "occasion, as an antagonist to you. Allow me, therefore, to "say, I was solicited to write a Life of Milton, for Boydell and "Nicholl, before I had the least idea that you and Mr. Fuseli "were concerned in a project similar to theirs. When I first "heard of your intention, I was apprehensive that we might "undesignedly thwart each other; but on seeing your proposals, "I am agreeably persuaded, that our respective labours will be "far from clashing; as it is your design to illustrate Milton with "a series of notes, and I only mean to execute a more candid "life of him than his late Biographer has given us, upon a plan "that will, I flatter myself, be particularly pleasing to those who "love the author as we do.

"As to the pecuniary interest of those persons who venture "large sums in expensive decorations of Milton, I am persuaded "his expanding glory will support them all. Every splendid "edition, where the merits of the pencil are in any degree worthy "of the poet, will, I think, be secure of success. I wish it "cordially to all; as I have great affection for the arts, and a "sincere regard for those whose talents reflect honour upon "them.

"To you, my dear Sir, I have a grateful attachment, for the "infinite delight which your writings have afforded me; and if, "in the course of your work, I have any opportunity to serve

Digitized by Google

"or oblige you, I shall seize it with that friendly spirit which "has impelled me at present to assure you both in prose and "rhyme, that I am,

"Your very cordial admirer,

"W. HAYLEY.

"P. S.—I wrote the enclosed sonnet on being told that our "names had been idly printed together, in a newspaper, *as* "*hostile competitors*. Pray forgive its poetical defects, for its "affectionate sincerity.

"From my ignorance of your address, I send this to your "booksellers, by a person commissioned to place my name in "the list of your subscribers; and let me add, if you ever "wish to form a new collection of names for any similar purpose, "I entreat you to honour me so far as to rank *mine*, of your "own accord, among those of your sincerest friends—Adieu!"

SONNET.

To WILLIAM COWPER, ESQ.,

ON HEARING THAT OUR NAMES HAD BEEN IDLY MENTIONED IN A NEWSPAPER, AS COMPETITORS IN A LIFE OF MILTON.

Cowper! delight of all who justly prize
The splendid magic of a strain divine,
That sweetly tempts th' enlightened soul to rise!
As sun-beams lure an eagle to the skies!
Poet! to whom I feel my heart incline
As to a friend endeared by virtue's ties;
Ne'er shall my name in pride's contentious line
With hostile emulation cope with thine.

Digitized by Google

No, let us meet with kind fraternal aim,
Where Milton's shrine invites a votive throng.
With thee I share a passion for his fame,
His zeal for truth, his scorn of venal blame:
But thou hast rarer gifts; to thee belong
His harp of highest tone, his sanctity of song.

When Hayley had prepared the letter and verses to attend it, his natural reserve made him hesitate whether he should thus intrude on the retired poet of Weston or not. The warm-hearted Dr. Warner decided the point by saying, he was confident that Cowper would be highly pleased with the packet; and by offering to convey it immediately, in person, to his bookseller, Johnson, of St. Paul's. The incidents that followed his prompt execution of that friendly office, the singular detention of the packet in the hands of the bookseller, and all the reciprocal kindness and intimacy, that rapidly grew between the poet of Weston and the recluse of Eartham, from their frequent letters and subsequent visits to each other, are so circumstantially displayed in Hayley's Life of Cowper, that it is unnecessary to expatiate in this work on the particulars of their intercourse. It will be sufficient to notice, as they occur, the times of their meeting, and the cordial admiration and love with which Hayley described his incomparable friend of Weston to his various correspondents.

It seems to have been a settled purpose of Hayley to visit the continent with his son, and to join his friend Flaxman at Rome,

Digitized by Google

in the course of this year. He wished to devote some years to that interesting scene, and to contemplate its arts and antiquities, with the advantage of such a fellow-student as his favourite Flaxman. Among the letters of his very amiable literary correspondent, Joseph Cooper Walker, Esq., there are some letters sent from Italy, to obtain for Hayley, then expected in Rome, the most obliging civilities from some illustrious natives of that country. A long residence with Flaxman in Rome, was a project, in which his fancy delighted; but he sacrificed all the pleasure he expected from it, to gratify his beloved associate Romney, who earnestly requested him to comply with a solicitation from Messrs. Boydell and Nicholl, and write for them such a life of Milton, as they wished to prefix to a magnificent folio edition of the divine bard. Romney imagined that his friend's compliance with their very earnest desire, would induce them, as the paymasters of the Shakspeare gallery, to behave to him with the greater kindness and liberality, concerning the many important pictures, that he himself had thoughts of executing for the adventurous proprietors of that splendid undertaking. The heart of Hayley was so truly interested in the professional glory of the admirable painter, whose apprehensive spirit he comforted and cheered for many years, that Romney's anxious wish, and his own inclination to vindicate Milton from the malignant asperity of his biographer, Johnson, surmounted the strong attractions of Rome; and induced Hayley to devote two years of diligent application at home, to the gratification of his friend

Digitized by Google

and the glory of Milton. His pecuniary reward for this sacrifice of foreign acquisitions, was trifling indeed; but he used to represent himself as most richly overpaid for it by his providential intimacy with Cowper.

Hayley's first visit to Weston took place in May 1792, and the following extracts from one of his letters to Romney from that village, express the cordial delight he took in that scene of friendship.

" CARISSIMO PITTORE,

" Often have I wished to convey you by magic to my " side, when you were not near me; but I believe I never wished " it more ardently than I have done under this very kind poetical " roof. You would be pleased here as I am, and think with me, " that my brother bard is one of the most interesting creatures " in the world, from the powerful united influence of rare " genius and singular misfortunes, with the additional charm of " mild and engaging manners.

" Then as to the grand article of females, (for what is a scene " without a woman in it,) here is a *Muse of seventy*, that I per- " fectly idolize. But I shall refer you to our friend Carwardine " for a sketch of her, as I have desired him to read to you a few " verses, that I have just addressed to her.

" This is a wonderful scene; it would affect you, I know, as it " does me. Few things in life have given me such heartfelt " satisfaction as my visit to this house; and the more so as my

Digitized by Google

"kind hosts seem to regard me as sent to them by Providence,
"for our general delight and advantage.

"In some future season, I have a fair prospect of making my
"engaging brother bard a personal friend of yours, and I flatter
"myself there is some chance of your seeing each other at
"Eartham, in the ensuing autumn.

"As to myself, I feel I have now found the thing I most
"wanted—a congenial poetical spirit, willing to join with me in
"the most social and friendly cultivation of an art dear to us
"both, and particularly dear to us as the cement of friendship."

Hayley's Life of Cowper has shewn how the pleasant expectations expressed in the letter just cited were happily fulfilled, and how the talents of the painter and the poet of Weston were amicably employed, while each endeavoured to please and honour the other. Perhaps a visit of several weeks in a sequestered village was never more productive of social delight, than the reciprocal visits of Hayley and Cowper, till the health of the latter was sunk in calamitous depression.

The party from Weston, consisting of the poet, and his venerable companion, Mrs. Unwin, with his beloved kinsman, whom he sportively called his Johnny of Norfolk, and a married couple of servants, arrived at Eartham in the first week of August, and did not leave it till the 17th of September. The heart and house of the Sussex recluse seemed to expand on this highly interesting occasion, as he received, while Cowper was with him,

Digitized by Google

other guests endeared to the two poets, and forming a numerous society, in which active talents and benevolent sympathy were continually producing variety of delight. Romney and Charlotte Smith were the most industrious of the party in their application to the pencil and the pen. The social studies of the two poets were confined to a diligent revisal of what each had written relating to Milton, and a joint translation of Andreini's *Adamo*.

All human delights must be blended with some alloy; a truth that Hayley felt at this season of his highest social enjoyment, in reflecting that he could not share the great pleasure he now enjoyed under his own roof with that beautiful and blameless woman whom he had selected as the partner of his life; but with whom, from her extraordinary nervous and mental inquietude he had found it impossible to live. In the conversation and sympathy of Cowper, to whom he imparted all the singularities of his destiny, he found the sweetest lenitive for his domestic misfortune. To that inestimable confidential friend, he often spoke of his pitiable Eliza; and in his letters to her, he endeavoured to amuse her restless mind by sending her such accounts of the universally-interesting Cowper as she particularly wished to receive. A curious reader may be willing to compare his private sketches of this memorable personage with the portrait at full length exhibited by his biographer. I shall, therefore, transcribe from Hayley's letters to his Eliza, all the passages in which he has spoken of Cowper, except those which would be a mere repetition of circumstances recorded in his life.

Digitized by Google

"EARTHAM, *August* 12, 1792.

"My dear brother bard, of Buckinghamshire, has accom-
"plished his kind idea; and after being rooted to his own cell
"for twenty years, he has made a marvellous effort that has
"astonished all his acquaintance, and conducted his venerable
"muse to thank her physician under his own roof.

"I had indeed very striking success, by the aid of Heaven,
"in restoring the lost limbs of this extraordinary patient. A
"lady, who has watched over the irregular health of our divine
"poet for near thirty years, and preserved his life in seasons of
"the most calamitous mental depression, deserves all possible
"regard and honour from every poetical mind. She is still in
"such a state, that we use electrical fire to give energy to her
"weak limbs every day; and there is something at times so
"ghastly in her countenance, that I should not be surprised if a
"third paralytic stroke put a sudden period to her life. Yet it
"is pleasing to see that she has some enjoyment of even the
"dregs of life; and my great object, in regard to my guests, is
"to prepare, as far as I can, the tender feeling spirit of this
"enchanting poet, to bear his impending loss of an invaluable
"friend, to whom perhaps he is more indebted than ever one
"human creature was before to another. The beloved painter
"arrived last night from London, whence he was driven, he says,
"by the most intolerable heat that he ever endured. It has
"shaken his nerves, but we hope to restore them.

"To accommodate my guests, I passed the night on the sofa
"in my library, and slept but little. Adieu.

Digitized by Google

"EARTHAM, *August* 25, 1792.

"You wish for a more characteristic account of the enchanting "Cowper. I must tell you, therefore, he is at the age of sixty-"one, a florid healthy figure, a little taller than our friend "Mr. Sargeant, with an interesting countenance that expresses "intelligence and energy of mind, with sweetness of manners, "and a certain tender and indescribable mixture of melancholy "and cheerfulness, gravity and sportive humour, which give "an admirable and delightful variety of attraction to his "character.

"We have had the great satisfaction of seeing his venerable "muse gain a little accession of strength every day in her "injured limbs. I continue to electrify her every evening; and "she now walks round the hill with such comfortable use of "her legs, as appears astonishing to us all, after the deplorable "debility to which we had seen them reduced."

Hayley felt the more anxious to amuse his correspondent at Derby with frequent anecdotes of the guests he received at Eartham, because he had found himself under a painful necessity of opposing, in a long letter, a surprising inclination which she had this year expressed, of making an excursion from the north to the south, and of passing some time with persons who resided in his neighbourhood.

A speedy answer from this noble-minded lady, contained her determination to resign her project of an excursion into Sussex. Hayley expressed his thankfulness in the following letter:

Digitized by Google

"EARTHAM, *June* 25, 1792.

"MY DEAR ELIZA,

"It is indeed my opinion, that a quickness in declaring "it adds to the favour of any kind concession for which a tender "spirit is waiting with anxiety. I am, therefore, particularly "obliged by the celerity with which you impart to me your "kind and generous determination to comply with my request. "As I approve despatch in acknowledging, no less than in con-"ferring an obligation, I now thank you speedily for the relief "you have thus afforded to my mind; and I thank you *sincerely*, "in spite of the little tartness of expression with which you "seem to reproach me for 'having driven you from your old "friends and the southern coast this summer.' The little acri-"monious spirit of a few angry words evaporates, and is soon "forgiven and forgot; but the solid merit of just and generous "conduct rests, and is (as it ought to be) tenderly and gratefully "remembered. At present you think my late requisition harsh, "imperious, and severe; but time and reflection will shew it to "your mind in a very different point of view; for, in truth, instead "of barbarously driving you from any real enjoyments, I have only "persuaded you (as tenderly as I could,) to relinquish a project "which must have grieved yourself in the end, because it must have "been painful and injurious to me, whom, even in an angry moment, "you would, I am persuaded, be truly sorry either to injure or "afflict: the more so, as ill health and ill luck have for a "considerable time loaded me with afflictions more than a good-"natured being would wish even an enemy to sustain. If you

Digitized by Google

"think me unreasonable in what I require, I am the more obliged "to you for granting a request, the propriety and justice of "which you have not yet discerned. As you think the coast of "Lincolnshire more eligible for you than Scarborough, I hope "you may find upon it such a bathing-place as you wish for "this summer. As to the next, I think it by no means impro-"bable, that I may by that time rest so peaceably under the "earth, that I shall not be able, either kindly or unkindly, to "obstruct or direct your movements upon it. While I remain "above ground, it will be my wish and my endeavour to soothe "and tranquillize your spirits, by the intercourse of kind letters, "and to furnish such little recruits to your slender revenue as "Fortune (if she will but smile on me a little, after all her frowns) "may enable me to supply. Adieu! God bless and direct you "in all things for the best; as I think he has graciously done in "your recent determination. The dear boy is well, and joins in "every kind wish to you with

"Your affectionate H.

Hayley had expressed in this letter, his real thoughts concerning the probable duration of his own life, for although neither ill health, nor ill fortune had the power to convert his native cheerfulness of spirit into melancholy, he was perfectly aware how very slender was the worn thread of his earthly existence, after several years of trouble and sickness. From his juvenile days, he had used himself to contemplate death, as a subject rather of animating than of depressive meditation.

Digitized by Google

Mrs. Hayley formed a new project for sea-bathing at Parkgate, a retired scene near Chester, which fortunately amused her fancy with a prospect of seeing many of her friends in her way to it. From the letter which announced her intention I select several passages, that forcibly display some of her most admirable mental peculiarities.

"DERBY, *July* 5, 1792.

"I shall also see Mr. Wedgewood and his agreeable daughter, "at Etruria; and on my return, it will be little, if any thing, out "of my way to call at Buxton. With sea-bathing, and a change "of scene, I hope to recover health and spirits, to feel more "comfort myself, and to administer more to my friends, than I "am capable of doing at present; but as I have already said, "I detest unavailing lamentation. This is therefore the *last* "letter, in which I intend *speaking to you of myself*. In future "I will tell you what I am reading, and what I have seen, if "I have seen any thing; but I feel to have lived, during the last "three years, the life of Mother Goose's Sleeping Beauty; "and to have dozed away all my senses: but I hope to rise "from the sea, though not a Venus, like Mrs. Keate, *yet a new-* "*born Minerva;* and on my return to this land of philosophy, "to become a philosopher. Hitherto, my natural genius, and "habits of society have impeded my progress: but I expect "in the cauldron of Medea, as Mrs. Smith call sit, to be re-"generated; at present, however, I keep to subjects *unphilo-*

Digitized by Google

" *sophic*. There was a passage in your last letter but one, which " I should have replied to, when I last wrote, had I not been " too ill. Till I recollected that *memory* is not required for a " poet, I felt surprised at your having *forgot* what I suffered " from my father's resignation of the Deanery to the death of " my mother, I might say, of my sister, when time and accident " began to *reconcile* me to the loss of my *earliest* connexions. " I had not, therefore, an idea, when I spoke of twenty-two " years of domestic vexation, of your taking the whole upon " yourself. I should indeed be ungrateful, were I not to ac- " knowledge *more* years of kindness, and polite attentions, than " I could *now* suppose so lively a character as yours capable " of paying to any woman. I have never regretted the time I " devoted to you, since I owe to it *powers* of enjoyment, without " which riches could afford me little gratification. I can now, " as my friend Mrs. Ann Clarke happily expresses it, 'retire to " my closet, with the best company, and look down upon that " world by which I am despised.'

" For what little proficiency I have made also in music, I am " wholly indebted to you; as I had not advanced far enough in " that difficult science, when I married, to amuse myself; and, " but for your prohibition, I should have given it up. My " piano-forte is now my greatest resource, when alone, and a " concert (at which I used to tire) is become my highest enter- " tainment. You see, therefore, that I am disposed to end our " little *hostile* correspondence by rendering you *ample justice*.

Digitized by Google

"To-morrow I shall begin reading the new *Botanic Garden*, "which I wish to hear your opinion of. You also promised me "a history of your late visit, when I had settled *my northern* "*tour*."

Part of Hayley's reply to this letter will shew how it pleased him.

"EARTHAM, *July* 15, 1792.

"MY DEAR ELIZA,

"I congratulate you most heartily on your "having settled your route to the sea, in a manner that will, "I trust, afford you satisfaction and amusement in no trifling "degree.

"The circumstance of seeing your pleasant friends on the "road, will render the journey itself agreeable; and the sight "of Etruria is such, as I should envy you, if it were possible "to envy the pleasures of those, to whom we wish every thing "kind and good.

"You will see, I believe, our friend Wright's picture of "Penelope, at Etruria, which is, I think, for sentiment and ex-"pression, the happiest production of his pencil. How is the "amiable painter himself? I fear, like me, too much of an "invalid, to be comfortably and successfully busy on works "that require much mental exertion.

"The worst of maladies, to a mind naturally active, is to be "reduced to inactivity.

Digitized by Google

"The *Botanic Garden*, will, I think, afford you great pleasure. "It is assuredly an admirable poem, and its beauties are so "varied, that surely the most fastidious of readers must, in the "course of it, find something to his taste.

"I promised you, as you truly tell me, an account of my late "visit. Much may be said, in merely saying, that it was a "visit to a brother bard, the enchanting Cowper. But I will give "you a more diffuse history of the various delight it afforded "me, in my next.

"At present, an oppressive head-ach renders me peculiarly "unfit for scribbling; but I could not let the post of this day "depart, without thanking you for your amicable letter. Tom "joins me in every kind wish to you. Adieu."

The generous solicitude which Mrs. H. expressed for the prosperity of this highly promising boy, and the advantages he had derived from the share which she had taken in the early cultivation of his mind, induced his father to send him for a residence of many months, under her care at Derby. But the particulars of that excursion which took place in 1793, are so minutely related in the life which Hayley composed of this extraordinary youth, that it now seems proper to confine this memorial to the personal history, and to the literary productions, of the Sussex poet and biographer. Towards the close of the year 1792, he was deeply engaged in his life of Milton, and in writing letters continually, to cheer the tender spirit of his new and most interesting friend, Cowper. His own long

Digitized by Google

injured health received much benefit from a gift that he received this year from his favourite physician, Dr. Austin, of which he gave the following description in a letter to Derby:

"EARTHAM, *December* 30, 1792.

"Having told you a diverting dream of the young student, "let me add that his amusements are not all of the visionary "kind, for every other morning he has a sort of *new spectacle*, "(though it is more to the ear than to the eye,) that diverts "him, as soon as he starts out of bed. This amusement con-"sists in attending me to a little wooden tower, stationed in "the hall. The said tower has a very large circular tin vessel "on the top of it, which, on pulling a string, revolves, and "throws a deluge of water on the head and limbs of the prisoner "in the said tower, which admits only a single person. This "most admirable machine is called a shower-bath, and was sent "to me, as a present, a few weeks ago, by an amiable physician "of London, who was so kind as to furnish me with medical "advice for Mrs. Unwin, when I was providentially the guest of "Cowper, at the time of her paralytic attack. I had often "heard the name of a shower-bath; but had no just conception "of the force and effect of this mode of bathing, till my excel-"lent friend had enabled me to make the experiment. I now prefer "it to every kind of bathing, except a plunge in the ocean "itself, and I hope to pursue it through the winter. It requires "no moderate degree of resolution, I confess, to persevere in "such a cold discipline these dark mornings; so apparently

Digitized by Google

"tremendous, that my boys shudder at the thought of it, and "at the sound of the cataract, which pours upon me so furiously, "that, in truth, I was almost stunned by the force of the water "on my head the first morning; but as the French proverb "says, '*On s'accoutume à tout*,' and a little habit has made it "very tolerable."

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER III.

OCCURRENCES OF THE YEARS 1793 AND 1794.

HAYLEY kept his word, as to persevering in this discipline through the winter, and it had a very beneficial effect in restoring his powers of application to study; but the more benefit he received from the kindness of Austin, the more deeply he felt the loss of that highly interesting friend, in the commencement of the following year, 1793; a loss of which he spoke very feelingly in a letter to Derby, from Eartham, January 27; a letter which he has inserted in the life of his son, whom he had pleased himself with a prospect of educating, as a physician, under the kind auspices of Austin. The letter mentions the orphans of his departed friend; and perhaps the feelings of the poet for them might give peculiar pathos to a hymn that he wrote at this time, and of which he spoke as follows, in another letter of January, 1793, to Mrs. Hayley.

"You know, I was ever a most strenuous friend to the "cultivation of the voice; and indeed, to neglect any talent that "may so innocently contribute to our own amusement, and that "of our friends, is, in my estimation, a sort of indolence, amount-"ing almost to sin. Singing is, in truth, a divine talent; and

Digitized by Google

"particularly so, when exercised in sacred music. I hope to "have soon an opportunity of sending you a little novelty of "that nature; for I have lately been requested to write a hymn "for some female orphans, to sing in their chapel; and as I doubt "not but the gentleman (a stranger to me) with whose request "I complied, will have the politeness to send me the music, "which is to be furnished by a composer of whom he spoke "highly, I shall be particularly pleased to supply you with a "musical rarity."

The hymn in question was so much a favourite of the author's friends, that I shall insert it here, to diversify this extensive narration.

A HYMN,

SUNG BY THE ORPHANS OF THE ASYLUM.

We have no parent, but our God,
Yet will we not in grief despair;
For he this vale of sorrow trod,
To make the desolate his care.

The voice of innocence and youth,
To thee, meek Saviour! may ascend!
Thou God of tenderness and truth,
Of infancy thou art the friend.

Through tears that fill the orphan's eye,
With humble confidence we see
Calamity, a holy tie,
That binds our helpless tribe to thee.

Digitized by Google

For Charity, angelic power!
Thy favourite delegate below,
Makes industry, our peaceful dower,
A guard from indigence and woe.

We have no parent, but our God,
In him we trust who reigns above:
Children he blest, when here he trod,
And we are children of his love.

The only composition of any magnitude, to which Hayley applied in this year, was his life of Milton, a work to which he devoted much time and extensive researches.

He did not suffer his studies to be interrupted even by the workmen whom he was obliged to employ, at this time, in putting a roof of new slate, instead of old tiles, upon his house, a circumstance to which he alludes in the first sentence of the following passage from one of his letters to Cowper; containing a remarkable anecdote concerning the biography on which he was engaged.

"EARTHAM, *August* 5th, 1793.

"I was in a great bustle the beginning of last week, *to prepare a dry and safe nest for the Roman Eagle.*

"A very kind letter from my friend Gibbon, informed me, "that he and Lord Sheffield (with whom he resides while he "remains in England) were going on a visit to our gracious "friend of Petworth, Lord Egremont, and that he intended to "steal away from the festive palace, and devote a few days to "the hermit of Eartham. He was so good as to keep his word,

Digitized by Google

" (no trifling instance of virtue and friendship in a man who has
" lived so much in the great world,) and I had the delight of finding
" my extraordinary guest not only friendly to me, as indeed he has
" ever been, but infinitely firmer in his health than I could have
" supposed it possible for him to be, considering the little use he
" makes of his legs. My ideas on religious and political topics,
" are by no means in unison with those of this wonderful man, but
" I have great delight in his talents, and still more in the benevo-
" lent disposition he shews towards me, and the objects of my
" regard. Great as he is, as a writer, I think he has equal, if not
" superior, talents for *conversation* ; and you will readily believe
" it quickened my relish for his society, to find him perfectly
" inclined to sympathize with me in esteem for you. He was
" enchanted, as every man of taste must be, with those speci-
" mens of your translation from the Latin poetry of Milton,
" with which you have so kindly allowed me to embellish my
" biographical composition; a kindness so very uncommon in
" men of the world, that the great historian said it *surprised*, and
" gave him a most favourable idea of your heart. My reply to
" that observation I shall leave you to guess; and reserve, also,
" for our conversation at Weston, some remarks of my guest
" on the moral character of Milton, in which you and I most
" assuredly shall never agree with him. My vanity will not
" allow me to *reserve so long*, a very high compliment he paid
" to one passage of the life.

" I only read him a few detached passages from the second
" part, after finishing the first, and upon hearing my vindication

Digitized by Google

" of our divine bard from the charge of servility and adulation, " he said, ' It is so able a defence, that I seriously do not think " the two chancellors, Thurlow and Loughborough united, could " have produced a better, had they been employed professionally; " but I still think it the defence of an advocate;' intimating, " that had he been on a jury to try the poet on *the charge*, he " must have pronounced him guilty. No! I replied, it is not " *the defence of an advocate;* but the simple dictates of truth " and affection. *Thurlow* and *Loughborough* might have *argued* " for him more eloquently, but they could not love him so well; " and I am afraid that Milton, were he living, might despise " them both."

The poet of Eartham having finished his life of Milton, in the autumn, took it with him, when he set forth on his second visit to Cowper. He arrived at Weston with his son, on the 20th of October. The account that he has given of the visit, and of the various incidents relating to it, in two of his biographical performances (the Life of Cowper and the Life of Thomas Hayley), is so copious and circumstantial, that here it will be sufficient to relate his return to London.

Having despatched his young fellow-traveller on a visit of many months to Mrs. Hayley, in Derby, and assisted Cowper in a revisal of his Homer, he returned from Weston to London, in the middle of November, not without suffering a little from an epidemical feverish complaint that was prevalent at Weston, His indisposition was increased by his journey, and he was con-

Digitized by Google

fined for a few days in the lodging of his friend, the Reverend James Clarke, who then inhabited some airy and pleasant apartments in Knightsbridge.

This young divine, a grandson of the learned William Clarke, once a residentiary of Chichester, and an early friend of Hayley, had been cordially received for a long residence at Eartham, in the year 1792, and was encouraged by his host, to distinguish himself by literary application. He now paid the kindest attention to the sick traveller under his roof, who having subdued his fever with the aid of a new physician, Dr. Latham, returned to his solitary studies at Eartham, in the first week of December. Before he took leave of the metropolis, he had the gratification of holding long conferences with Lord Thurlow, concerning their most interesting friend of Weston; and the following extracts from his letters to Cowper, may serve to shew the zeal of his friendship for the poet, whom he regarded as a brother of his heart.

"*November* 21, 1793.

"I am revived, my dear brother; and as a proof of my having "regained both strength and courage, I have breakfasted with "Thurlow, by my own invitation, and am to visit him again at "his own fervent request.

"He spoke of you in a manner that pleased me, or I would "not have visited him again.

"I scrawl this in Chancery-Lane, at the house of a friend, to "whom I have introduced our beloved Rose, who is chattering "to my host, while I despatch this hasty bill of health, for it

Digitized by Google

"deserves not the name of a letter. Good tidings from my "dear little Grecian in the north."

By a letter from Hayley to his Eliza, on the last day of the year 1793, it appears that he was then occupied in his studies at Eartham, and enlivened by a visit from his young friend, William, of Kew, of whom he speaks in the following words:

"He is a pleasant ingenuous youth; and as I said yesterday, in "writing to Cowper, I hope I am preparing him to enjoy with "Tom, what I truly enjoyed with his deceased father, a friend-"ship of more than twenty years, never darkened or damped by "one chilling cloud. As his education has been awkwardly "interrupted, I think Tom may be of use in aiding him to "retrieve suspended scholarship; and as they will be both "fond of music, they may sympathize, I hope, both in study "and diversion. My young guest will remain with me this "week, and I shall probably treat him with a sight of the noble "house at Petworth, to-morrow."

Hayley ever regarded his young friend Meyer, as a secondary son. He thought he had great talents for ecclesiastical eloquence, and he was so sanguine in his hope of seeing him one day an eminent divine, that he began a serious poem, to encourage him to choose the clerical line of life; and even obtained a promise of preferment for him from Lord Egremont; but these visions of the poet were not realized. The course of this memoir will probably shew what incidents gave to the accomplished

Digitized by Google

young Meyer a different destination. We must leave him, at present, on his way to join the classical studies of his juvenile associate, Thomas Hayley, in Derbyshire. As much mention is made of Meyer, in the poet's biographical account of his filial sculptor, I will endeavour to avoid a repetition of circumstances recorded in that biography. Let me now only dwell on the literary productions of the paternal student at Eartham, and on the most remarkable of his joys and sorrows, as they arose on the narrow stage of studious and retired life.

His literary occupation at this period, is stated in the following passage from one of his letters to Cowper:

"*December* 12, 1793.

"Yes! you were right in your conjecture, and the honour and "glory of his King's booksellership would not allow Nicol to "think of publishing the *Life of Milton*, in the shape you saw. "But as that questionable shape had *your sanction*, I, on my "part, was firmly resolved that my work should not be disho-"nourably garbled; a mighty dilemma on both sides! I fortu-"nately conceived an expedient, which seems to have satisfied "both the royal bookseller and the enthusiastic biographer. I "said to my scrupulous royalist, I will indulge you in your "humour, if you will also show equal indulgence to me. You "shall have just such a meagre poetical life as you wish to "insert in your splendid book, if you will give me five hundred "impressions of all the various portraits, with which you mean "to decorate that life, that I may produce, in a handsome quarto "volume, my undiminished work in its original state.

Digitized by Google

"The proposal pleased, and I hope by this measure all parties "will be satisfied, and the honour of our magnanimous idol will, "I trust, be maintained as it ought to be.

"I am now, therefore, engaged in the irksome work of "reducing my whole length portrait of our immortal favourite, "to a pitiful miniature; and shall cordially rejoice, when they "are both fairly off my hands."

Hayley fulfilled his engagement to Nicol, who published in 1794, the abridged life in his splendid folio edition of Milton; and the biographer afterwards published, in quarto, his unmutilated work; but, as he thought Nicol had treated him illiberally, in naming a niggardly recompense for his labour, he disdained to accept the various prints for which he had stipulated, as ornaments to his quarto publication. He gratified his own pride by the rejection; and it was infinitely more gratified by a very polite compliment from the literary Lord Charlemont, who told a friend of the biographer, that he regarded his undiminished *Life of Milton*, as one of the best pieces of Biography in the English language. The author, though not vain enough to take the compliment in its literal sense, was highly gratified by this applause; and still more by the approbation of Cowper, and the literary veteran of Winchester, Hayley's old friend, Dr. Warton, to whom he addressed the performance in its original state, with a dedication of considerable extent, that bears the date of Eartham, Oct. 29, 1795. Let us now return to the commencement of the year 1794, when the heart of Hay-

Digitized by Google

ley suffered a severe and unexpected affliction, which he feelingly describes in the following passage of a letter to his confidential friend, Rose, Jan. 25, 1794.

"What a medley of joy and sorrow, my dear Rose, is human "life! I was just rejoicing in your kind assurance, that you had "triumphed over your troubles, which my affectionate solicitude "for you had magnified to excess, when a new and very bitter "affliction fell suddenly upon me, in the unexpected tidings of "Gibbon's death.

"Farewell to all the refined pleasures, which I had so vainly "projected both for you and myself, in much future conversation "with that friendly being, of most exquisite talents, to whose "engaging society (though I could not adopt his sentiments on "more than one subject of importance) I have still been very deeply "indebted for instruction and delight. I feel on his decease not "only my own loss, but that of my very dear little disciple, whom "he had most kindly invited to Lausanne, and who would "certainly have derived the most desirable advantages from being "allowed to attend me on a visit, the prospect of which was so "pleasing to my fancy and my heart.

"There is another point of view, in which the loss of this "invaluable friend appears to me, in particular, most unsea-"sonable and severe. I mean in regard to our dear bard of "Weston, as I am confident that Gibbon would have solicited "Lord Spencer to enforce my application to Pitt, in behalf of "our beloved Cowper.

Digitized by Google

"It is a maxim with me, that the lesson we ought to learn "from that severest of discipline, the death of a dear friend, is to "quicken our affection and our services towards those whom "Heaven yet allows us to enjoy; and in conformity to this "maxim, I have presumed to write a very long letter to Lord "Spencer, which I enclose to you unsealed. If you think that "*my zeal* does not render me *too* presumptuous, be so kind as to "seal the letter, and deliver it whenever you can happily find, "or contrive to produce, the

"'Mollia tempora fandi.'

"As you know, and may kindly repeat to his Lordship, (with "additional force, that your own talents can abundantly supply,) "the arguments I urged to Pitt, in behalf of our most interesting "friend, I flatter myself the commission will please you in "various points of view, and I particularly wish you, for your "own sake, to cultivate the regard of Lord Spencer. He really "is entitled to such attention from his intrinsic merit; and I have "more reasons for this suggestion, than I have time at present to "enumerate."

As Hayley's love of independence had made him resolve never to ask any favour for his own emolument, it was his constant endeavour to employ such influence, as his literary character happened to obtain for him with persons of distinction and authority, in trying to serve such friends as wanted his assistance, and for whose prosperity he was most anxious. The success

Digitized by Google

that attended his writing to Lord Spencer, it would be superfluous to relate in this Memoir, because Hayley has elsewhere recorded his various endeavours to improve the fortune, and to restore the spirits, of his friend Cowper. Admitting, therefore, all description of such writings as speak for themselves, I will here transcribe the few affectionate verses, by which the poet of Eartham tried to soothe his own feelings of sorrow, for the loss of the great historian, in the shape of an epitaph.

Formed for the studious and the cheerful hour,
Here, Gibbon, rest! thy course of glory run!
Few thy compeers in literary power;
And in the charm of social converse, none!
Thy works immortalize th' historian's fame;
To fond remembrance let this verse commend
Worth that delighted by a dearer name,
Thou sprightly guest! thou sympathetic friend.

Hayley felt the painful surprise of Gibbon's death, the more acutely, from the circumstance of his being engaged to visit the historian at Sheffield-place, at the time when a very kind billet arrived at Eartham, to say, that instead of being able to wait in Sussex for the pleasure of receiving an eagerly expected friend, he was under the necessity of hastening to London for medical advice, though without an apprehension that his life was in danger. All the distressing circumstances of his illness and decease, have been faithfully recorded by his friendly biographer, Lord Sheffield.

Digitized by Google

The tender gloom which the sudden loss of this memorable man (so long endeared to the poet) had thrown over his mind, prepared him to sympathize in the recent domestic affliction of his noble friend, Lord Egremont, who sought to soothe the wounded feelings of a very affectionate heart, by sharing for some days the tranquil retirement of Hayley. This remarkable incident is related in the following passage of a letter from the poet to his Eliza :—

"EARTHAM, Sunday, *February* 23, 1794.

"Your animating packet arrived most seasonably to cheer "my spirits, a little exhausted in comforting a noble friend "under sudden affliction; the noble friend, whom I mentioned "to you in my last letter, and of whose fine children I probably "spoke with the regard that I feel for them. Their kind-hearted "father surprised me by entering my study on Wednesday, and "bursting into tears. His sorrow soon excited my perfect "sympathy, when his full heart was able to tell me that he had "suddenly lost a most lovely little boy, particularly endeared to "me as a godson and namesake of mine.

"I sympathized so cordially in his sorrow, that I was mourn-"fully gratified by the request which he added to this information "of his loss, that if I were alone, I would allow him with the "afflicted mother, and two other children, to remain under my "roof for a few days, till the poor lost child was consigned to "the grave.

"He was obliged to return on Friday, or he would have pro-"longed his stay for two or three days more, as he appeared to "derive great consolation from the society of the hermit.

Digitized by Google

"His feelings are very acute and tender; and I am so anxious "about him, that I cannot refrain from crossing the hills to-day, "to make a personal inquiry after my guests. He spoke of "Tom with the most engaging partiality, and expressed great "solicitude for his return, and not less admiration of the forti-"tude he has lately displayed."

The circumstances of this family visit to Eartham, produced that friendly familiarity between the peer and the poet, of which so many traces appear in Hayley's life of his son: it is, therefore, unnecessary to expatiate on the subject in this memoir. The year 1794 abounded in events peculiarly apt to affect the heart of Hayley with a series of strong emotions, both of sorrow and of joy. The former was still predominant, and the sufferings of the sympathetic poet were uncommonly severe, when, at the suggestion of a friend near Weston, he visited that beloved village again, for the chance of affording relief to the dejected spirit of his favourite Cowper.

The various occurrences of those distressful times are so commemorated in Hayley's life of that most interesting poet, that here I shall only make a single remark on that memorable visit.

It may be both pleasing and useful, to observe the gracious tendency of Providence to reward a benevolent action, although the person performing it had not the slightest expectation or idea of ever receiving a substantial reward for an exertion of humanity in the service of an afflicted friend. When Hayley travelled to Weston in April, 1794, for the purpose of befriending the dejected sufferer to the utmost of his power, he had been so

Digitized by Google

shaken in his own health and fortune, that he had hardly bodily strength sufficient for so trying a scene; and his purse was so much exhausted, that he was obliged to borrow of his neighbours, before he began his journey, the cash requisite for his travelling expenses. His heart and soul were absorbed in the wish and hope of improving the health and fortune of that dear and deserving invalid, without any surmise that his zeal on that occasion would be productive of any solid advantage to himself; but it may prove an anticipation of pleasure to a good-natured reader, to be told in this chapter, that the services rendered in the year 1794, by the poet of Eartham to the poet of Weston, gradually became a source not only of cordial gratification, but of most important honour and advantage to Hayley in the evening of his life. What he endured in his own feelings during his attendance on the beloved sufferer, in perceiving continually how incapable that sufferer appeared of receiving any comfort or relief from all the assiduity and exertion of the tenderest friendship, may be easily conceived, and is found to have been tenderly expressed at the time, in the following passage of a letter from Hayley at Weston, to one of Cowper's favourite friends, the young, accomplished, and active Samuel Rose,

"*April* 17, 1794.

"The sufferings of our friend form such a spectacle, as it is "indeed most grievous and terrible to behold. Lady Hesketh "supports this severe trial of her kindness and fortitude, with a "tender heroism that I cannot too much admire and applaud. "Heaven, I trust, will supply us both, with strength equal to the

Digitized by Google

"calamitous occasion. To me it is a comfort to reflect, that "should I chance to lose my life or my senses in excess of "anxiety for this most interesting sufferer, you, I am confident, "my dear Rose, will act towards my poor little desolate boy, with "all the kindness of a father. Forgive this little burst of parental "tenderness, and of friendly confidence, from a heart, whose "fibres have been shaken rather too forcibly! I shall calm and "collect my thoughts by degrees, and accomplish, I trust, a little "good in this trying scene. Should Heaven bless me with the "power of restoring this dear dejected creature, all the pangs of "the present season will be abundantly overpaid. At all events, "it must be an infinite satisfaction to my heart and soul, to have "done all that I may be able to do in this period of complicated "calamity; and if little can be done for the two deplorable "invalids, yet at the worst I shall afford some relief and encou-"ragement to the admirable Lady, who devotes herself so "generously to the care of her inestimable relation, and at times "is half overwhelmed by the cruel weight of a charge so inex-"pressibly affecting."

The anguish of heart, that Hayley suffered at Weston, was in some degree compensated by various important gratifications. He had the delight of receiving there his son from Derby, and of perceiving, that the conversation of that tender youth had a more soothing effect on the spirits of Cowper than the voice of any other friend. He had also the delight of hearing there, by letters from London, that his long incessant

Digitized by Google

endeavours to improve the fortune of his distressed friend, had at last succeeded. But he has elsewhere, given so full an account of these transactions, that here I shall only say, he was indebted for this delight to the beneficence of Lord Spencer, to whom he paid his personal respects on his return from Weston to London. He was so eager to be restored to his own favourite retirement, that he passed but a few days in town, and only one with his friends of Kew, in his way to Sussex; but of that single day he speaks very gratefully, in the following passage of a letter to Mr. Rose.

"EARTHAM, *May* 16, 1794.

"Our day at Kew was delightful; and we wished for you in "those magnificent gardens, where your pleasing friend, Aiton, "vied with nature herself in entertaining us. His kindness and "liberality have endeared him to me in no common degree. "Have you heard further from Lord Spencer? I conclude the "business is *complete*, and I mean to write a short letter of "gratitude to Mr. Pitt, when my brains are recovered from "their late agitation. Our incomparable Lady Hesketh has "been a little depressed in spirit, but the close of her last letter "inclines me to hope, that every thing at Weston will proceed "to crown all our wishes. Adieu."

Hayley had an incessant propensity to cherish cheerful hopes in the darkest of prospects. This valuable propensity arose from the extreme warmth of his affections,

"For love can hope, where reason would despair."

Digitized by Google

And as his love for Cowper was as strong as manly friendship can be, it led him during the course of the several years, in which that most interesting sufferer had still to linger under calamitous depression, not only to hope that he might yet behold his recovery, but sometimes almost to believe that he was actually restored. How fervently he wished and laboured to promote that most desirable restoration, other books will sufficiently testify. It is now become more and more proper for the writer of this Memoir to confine it to the personal history and literary compositions of the miscellaneous author, whose chequered life it was the professed purpose of this work to delineate.

His health had suffered not a little from his anxiety and exertions at Weston. In writing to Rose, from whom he expected a friendly visit, he spoke of it in the following terms:

"EARTHAM, *August*, 4, 1794.

"As there is always great danger in expecting too much "pleasure from any earthly scenes, let me guard you, my dear "friend, against the danger of expecting too much from your "visit to the south. The scenery will please you; but I fear "you will find the hermit in too shabby a state of health, to "afford you all the mental entertainment he could wish. In "truth I have been wofully *unwell*, ever since my return from "Weston; and so pestered with your severe enemy, the head-"ach, that I have been forced to suspend all composition, and "try if idleness will banish the languor of the brain. My "malady, I believe, arises solely from a series of vexations,

Digitized by Google

" with some imprudent application to study, when I ought to " have shut my books. I literally believe, that the joy of " receiving you as my guest will be one of the best medicines " I can take."

The presage in this letter was in some measure realized. Hayley revived on the arrival of his animated guest, whom he introduced to his kind noble neighbour of Petworth, and afterwards attended him to the house of their friend Lord Sheffield, where they formed his Lordship's little cabinet council, to sit in judgment on the posthumous manuscripts of his illustrious intimate, the departed historian.

Of this interesting visit, Hayley gave the following account in a letter to his Eliza :—

" EARTHAM, *September* 7, 1794.

" I should have written to you from Sheffield-Place, had not " my eyes been rather *overplied*, (to use a Miltonic word,) in " an eager perusal of such manuscripts of our dear departed " historian, as my very obliging host imparted to me in the most " friendly manner. My first arrival under that roof, where I had " vainly expected last year to pass many a social and pleasing " day with the deceased, affected me so strongly, that I hardly " slept an hour the first night; and I was indeed, for some days, " little fit for any mental exertion; but I revived by degrees from " the depressive influence of a scene that spoke at first rather " too strongly to my heart. The rural beauty of the spot, the

Digitized by Google

" comfort and kindness of the house, relieved and re-animated me, " so that I think the excursion has rather been beneficial than " injurious to my shattered health. I returned to my own " retirement on Friday night, and had the gratification of finding " the dear little man particularly happy to see me, as my " return had been accidentally delayed beyond the time when " I told him he might expect me. I am much pleased with the " warmth of heart and considerate fidelity of friendship, which " our noble host exerts in regard to the memory and reputation " of the great historian, whose life he intends to publish in the " course of the next spring."

Lord Sheffield, with his eldest daughter Maria, and their friend Harriet Poole, returned the hermit's visit, by passing some days with him at Eartham, a gratification of which he thus spoke in a letter to Rose.

" EARTHAM, *November* 16, 1794.

" Yes, my dear Rose, our interesting friends of Sheffield-Place " have been with me, and are gone, so fleet the pleasures of " human life! but

——————————" ' Hoc est
" ' Vivere, bis vitâ posse priore frui.'

" And the pleasant days we have just passed, *(nisi tu quod non " simul esses, cætera læti!)* are still agreeable in recollection. " But you will ask, what we have done? in truth we have not " been idle: for as I told the lively intelligent Maria, it was a " mere excursion of *business to her*, who read with the diligence

Digitized by Google

" of a clerk in office; and she must visit the hermitage again " for *amusement*. She read aloud to us, (and delightfully she " reads,) the whole life and all the letters of the historian, from " the period where the memoirs end; so that our noble editor " may now, I think, keep his word to you of beginning to print " very soon after Christmas. He was pleasant and friendly. " Maria and Paulina were as charming as females should be to " a hermit; and the visit seemed to gratify all parties. We " revised his Lordship's Introduction, and I have exhorted him to " exert himself with immediate diligence and spirit, in preparing " the important close of his work.

" I have a thousand things to say to the dear pleader; but am " forced to scrawl in abominable haste, having exhausted the " morning (to use a Gibbonism) in various necessary occupations.

" I am sorry you could not enjoy more of the great display of " eloquence in the interesting trial. I long to have you, like " Erskine, drawn to your own house in a triumphal chariot, and " saluted by thousands of admirers.

" I am not ambitious for myself, but I am *very ambitious for* " *my friends;* and wish to see Tom a little Michael Angelo. " Thank Heaven, his kind instructor is arrived safe from Rome. " '*Currat lex et vivant artes*' is our favourite sentiment at " present."

It has been already remarked, that the year 1794 was productive of events that deeply affected the heart of Hayley, with vicissitudes of affliction and delight. The grief and anxiety

Digitized by Google

which he endured from the death of his friend Gibbon, and the increasing malady of his favourite Cowper, were fortunately tempered by subsequent emotions of surprise and joy; first, on the success of his perseverance in the attempt to obtain a pension for the dear dejected poet: and again, towards the close of the year, by the prosperous return of the excellent Flaxman from Rome, and his friendly solicitude to receive, as his disciple in art, the very promising son of his old friend. The kindness and the virtues that Flaxman displayed on that interesting occasion, and in all his conduct, towards the juvenile sculptor, are duly and gratefully recorded in Hayley's life of that universally beloved and admirable youth. His father employed the closing days of this year, 1794, in preparations for the establishment of his son in the new situation, which friendship and genius had united to appoint for him, as a source of the fairest and most animating expectations. This prospect, with some increasing hopes of Cowper's revival, and the blessed certainty of having improved his friend's fortune, served to counteract, in the sensations of Hayley, the depressive influence of his connubial infelicity, aggravated by the resolution of his restless Eliza to quit the respectable circle of her friends in Derbyshire, for a residence in London; a resolution, which the advice of her sincerest friends, united to that of her husband, had tried in vain to prevent. As he has fully shown how justly he grieved for that occurrence, in his memoir of the young sculptor, I will close the present chapter with an allusion to the comfort and gratification he derived from his services to Cowper; a topic

Digitized by Google

on which their friend Samuel Rose has spoken with so much animation and cordiality in one of his letters to Eartham, that his words appear worthy of insertion here, to illustrate the character of Hayley.

"Chancery-Lane, 1794.

"I never think of this most happy and interesting event, (the "grant of Cowper's pension,) without recollecting with gratitude, "how much indebted all Mr. Cowper's friends are to you, for "your persevering benevolence upon this occasion. If a man's "happiness is proportioned to his social and philanthropic "exertions, which I actually believe to be the case, I know no "man entitled to so large a share as yourself, knowing no one "who has obliged and benefited so many."

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER IV.

OCCURRENCES AND COMPOSITIONS IN THE YEARS 1795 AND 1796.

Early in the first month of the year 1795, Hayley conducted the young pupil of his friend Flaxman to London, and remained with him a few weeks, in a small lodging-house, very near the new residence of his excellent master. The poet was anxious to complete the foundation of a cordial and indelible attachment between the incomparable artist and his promising disciple. He had long ago projected an essay on Sculpture, in the series of poetical epistles to Flaxman; and had finished the first of them, before his friend began his journey from Rome, on his way to England.

The joyous event of his return, and his endearing eagerness to befriend, to the utmost of his power, the youth ambitious to study, and to excel under his instruction, induced Hayley to take increasing delight in his society, and to meditate, with new ardour, the projected extensive poem, by which he hoped to promote the professional glory of his friend. As he intended to include, in his notes to this poem, many historical particulars concerning the artists of antiquity, it was, of course, a composition that required much time and application. He pursued it, to speak in the language of artists, *con amore;* but it did not

Digitized by Google

preclude him from producing a few shorter publications, on subjects which the striking occurrences of the time suggested to the poet. The brilliant and popular eloquence of Erskine, in his defence of Horne Tooke, inflamed the fancy of Hayley; and he composed a poem entitled *The National Advocates*, to commemorate the triumph of oratorical talents so admired and honoured as the supporters of freedom. The author intrusted this anonymous performance to the care of Mr. Rose; and his friendship for that young barrister was one of the motives that excited him to produce it, as he hoped it might tend to stimulate his friend's professional ambition; and it might possibly lead him into useful intimacy with the triumphant man of genius, whom the poet was so eager to celebrate. It happened that Hayley received his first printed copy of this poem under the roof of his friends at Kew, a favourite scene to which his son had attended him; as he was returning from London, in February, to resume his own studies at Eartham. A letter to Rose, dated February 15, 1795, thus mentions the incident.

"I was much obliged to you for despatching the parcel to "Kew, where it enabled me to amuse a very dear afflicted "family, to whom I read the new production, after swearing my "little audience to secrecy. Altogether it makes a very decent "appearance, in point of typography, and I return you many "thanks for your kind care in swaddling the baby, and sending "it so handsomely into the world. 'Va, mon enfant, prends ta

Digitized by Google

"fortune.' I shall wait with *parental anxiety* to know how it is "received by the gentlemen of the robe."

In a subsequent letter, March 7, 1795, Hayley thus spoke again to Rose of this publication:

"I believe you judged rightly in your mode of presenting the "National Advocates; yet I confess I lost by it one principal "gratification that I had proposed to myself, in the idea of your "deriving from the work an agreeable introduction to fami-"liarity, if not to friendship, with two eminent characters of your "profession.

"There was more of affection than vanity in this prospect; "and my affectionate feelings are, perhaps, equally, though other-"wise, gratified by your generous solicitude not to endanger the "secret of your friend.

"I was diverted by your description of Warton's eager inquiry; "but you were a little cruel to the poet, not to give him the "least intimation of what the pleasant veteran of criticism "ventured to say of the anonymous poetry."

It often happens that poems, founded on the popular wonder of the passing day, and expected therefore to be peculiarly successful in the season of their birth, acquire no popularity. This was the case with *The National Advocates*, which, although the public mind appeared full of the subject, was so little noticed, that the bill of the publisher was loaded with a heavy balance

Digitized by Google

against the author; but as parents are sometimes singularly fond of their unfortunate children, so authors are apt to be partial to their unprosperous publications: and this luckless production was rather a favourite of Hayley, though not to such an absurd degree as to have it said of him,

"Sua solus amavit,"

for the neglected eulogy had several fervent admirers. The poet, undaunted by his failure, composed also in this year another occasional poem, in which, as in the former, he was partly influenced by his zealous hope of promoting the prosperity of his friend Rose. In one of his letters to that confidential friend, he gives the following account of the composition alluded to:

"EARTHAM, *June* 26, 1795.

"Apropos of Lords! be assured, my dear Rose, that you "will ever find me willing to write to any Lord or Lady "in the land, upon any prospect of having even a chance "to serve you by such a proceeding; and our good friend, "Lord Spencer, appears to me so happily pre-disposed to "serve you, that I think an application to him, if we can "fortunately adjust it to the *mollia tempora fandi*, may "obtain the object of *your* wishes, and consequently of *mine*. "Few things could give me more pleasure than to make a "successful effort for you in this quarter; and, to tell you a "*poetical secret*, I have desired my muse to make a *curtsy*, with "a view to your future interest, *on this very ground*. To explain

" this riddle, I must inform you (but let it be *entre nous*), that " although I do not meditate, as you kindly suggest, a Life of " Sir William Jones, I have been eagerly composing a poem of " considerable length to his memory, in the course of which I " address some stanzas, (for the poem is written in the elegiac " measure,) immediately to Lord Spencer. Whether my Muse " *curtsies* on this occasion with any tolerable grace, I cannot yet " venture to say; but you shall judge yourself, whenever you " will favour us with that glimpse of you which you promised " before your long vacation.

" I had some thoughts of sending you the poem to criticise, " but as your hands are so full of various occupations, it would " be barbarous at present, especially as parts of it must be a " little obscure, till they are elucidated by a series of notes, " which I am forming from different works of my favourite Sir " William, whose character I delight to contemplate in every " point of view.

" To return, however, to Lord Spencer. If you find the poem " I have mentioned worthy of publication, and the stanzas, " pointed at our noble friend, such as may strike him exactly as " we could wish, you will then assuredly agree with me in " thinking, that my best season for writing to him in your behalf " will be just after the impression made upon his heart and mind " by the verses that speak of him as the friend of Sir William, " who wrote, as you probably remember, a very elegant ode on " his marriage, which the mother of the bride (Lady Lucan) " very politely sent to me, to please our friend Gibbon. This

Digitized by Google

" good lady is now at Bognor; and as she once flattered me so " highly, as to copy one of Romney's heads of me in miniature, " I have thought it incumbent on me to invite her to this her- " mitage, which she has very kindly promised to visit. I want " to ask her many questions concerning Sir William and her " son-in-law. Let me now thank you for Sir William's *Essay on* " *Bailment!* how admirably written!

In the following July, the poet spoke as follows to the same correspondent:

" Behold the Elegy! and a series of notes upon it! I invest " you with *supreme powers of life and death over both the verse* " *and the prose.* Seriously, I beg you to sit in judgment *alone* " and *immediately* on this little work. If your judgment and " your feelings honestly exclaim *imprimatur*, you will deliver " it to Cadell."

Another letter to Rose, in July, intimates, that he had approved the poem; and gives the following account of the Ladies whom the poet had invited to his retirement.

" I hasten, my dear Rose, to impart to you what I consider as " a *good omen* of success, not only for the Elegy, but for a point " infinitely more interesting, our success in a certain *legal object* " with *Lord Spencer*. My good omen is, a gracious, I might " almost say, an affectionate, visit from the noble Lord's mother-

Digitized by Google

"in-law, and her very pleasing youngest daughter, who said to "me, with a delightful *naïveté*, 'How very happy you must be "in this charming place!' The hermit answered with his usual "gallantry: 'Stay with me, dear Ladies, and I certainly must "be so.'

"Seriously, I was highly pleased with my guests; we talked "much of Lord Spencer, of Cowper, of Sir William Jones, of "*you*. The old Lady did not recollect you, but the young one "did, for your comfort, and much to your advantage."

The Elegy was soon published, and in a letter to Rose, of August 30th, the poet thus feelingly speaks of one gratification that he had just received from its public appearance:

"I have been shedding tears of tender pleasure over an "enchanting letter from Lady Jones, to our beloved Flaxman. "Her mode of speaking on the Elegy and its author, is one of "the most delicious rewards I ever received from a poetical "composition, and will tend, I trust, to inspirit the shattered "faculties of the poet."

Hayley has left, in the copious memoir of his son, so circumstantial an account of the troubles by which his own heart was disquieted towards the end of the year 1795, that it is here unnecessary to dwell upon them. I will, therefore, only notice two incidents relating to the person of the author, which I do not observe in that parental biography, but which I transcribe from a letter addressed to his son, and dated December 17, 1795.

Digitized by Google

"I hasten to answer your kind and filial inquiry concerning "myself, and if my life is as dear and valuable to you as I am "persuaded you think it, you will rejoice in my *two escapes;* "the first from a strange attack of internal malady in the night, "which affected the heart in so singular a manner, that its "beating shook my bed like an earthquake. I never experienced "so marvellous a sensation, and can only compare it to the "convulsive rattle of a watch when the spring breaks. I was "going to ring for assistance, but recollected that if it was the "bursting of a vessel about the heart, as it seemed to be, the "whole affair would be over before any body would reach "me; and, at all events, it would be useless to disturb the "sleepers in the night. I, therefore, pressed the convulsive part "with all the strength of both my hands. In a few minutes "the malady, whatever it was, subsided. I went to sleep again, "and in the morning was as well as usual. My second escape "was from a severe fall of my horse, who, while I turned my "head to speak to some one behind me, very oddly entangled "his fore-foot in a deep, hard, frozen rut, and came down upon "his nose; but being full of spirit, he bounded up again, and "your equestrian humble servant was not even dislodged from "the saddle."

Hayley, in closing the year 1795, the first year of his son's diligent studies under Flaxman, had every reason to be gratified by the delightful cordiality of esteem and attachment which prevailed between the master and his disciple; but as he has

Digitized by Google

spoken of them both very much at large in his life of the young sculptor, only brief and incidental mention will be made of them in the sequel of this memoir.

Hayley began the year 1796 with a new practice, which he had learned from the posthumous papers of his friend Gibbon, a practice which the poet strongly recommended to his son, and to several young friends, namely, that of keeping a brief but exact diary of his occupation, and particularly of whatever he read or wrote. From the series of his own diaries, it appears, that he employed himself daily, in the commencement of this year, on the composition of a new and extensive, though interrupted poem. He was probably induced to suspend his Epistles on Sculpture till a wider compass of reading on the subject had supplied him with a more ample stock of materials; and as habit had made it agreeable to him to devote a few of the first hours in every day to poetical composition, he began on the 25th of December, 1795, a poem in blank verse, on a topic suggested to him by his parental affection. It is entitled *The Art of Choosing a Wife*, in a series of epistles addressed to his son; with a motto from Hesiod. The author seems to have proceeded with great alacrity in his commencement of this work; for it appears from his diary of April, 1796, that, in the first days of that month, he read to his friend Rose, then on a visit at Eartham, the two first epistles. His confidential critic applauded them both; and the second epistle yet more than the first. But declining health, occasioned by a variety of troubles, obliged the poet to throw aside this favourite composition, after writing a few verses as the opening

Digitized by Google

of a third epistle. The subsequent and more afflicting illness of his son precluded him from resuming it. The poet's diary was written in small memorandum books, one assigned to every month; the following reflection closes the book of November, 1796: "In "closing the last month but one of the year, I cannot fail to "remark with regret, how very little I have done since the spring "gave the first check to my composition.

"Indeed that little may be called nothing; yet I know not "how it could have been possible for me to have corrected this "deficiency: for, in the first place, the state of my health hardly "admitted the hope of successful composition; and, secondly, "concerns of high importance, respecting many of my friends, "have so occupied my mind, that had my brain been in better "order for poetical composition, I could hardly have detached "my attention sufficiently from affairs that pressed upon my "heart. Altogether, in reviewing the months that have pro-"duced no visible works of the pen, I trust I may say with "some degree of truth, in citing a happy verse, 'J'ai fait un "peu de bien, c'est mon meilleur ouvrage.'"

It was, however, at all times a source of deep mortification to Hayley, to perceive that he had been reduced to a state of much mental inactivity. How much he grieved for an involuntary suspension of his poetical designs may be conjectured from the following extracts from his diary of December, 1796.

"Wednesday 7th.—I began once more (I thank Heaven) to "write verse, after long and painful interruption of various

Digitized by Google

" intended works; wrote twelve lines in the poem on sculpture, " and translated a Greek epigram on an iron statue of an oppres- " sive king."

" Monday, 19.—Wrote fifty verses as a compliment to General " Fitzpatrick, on his excellent speech in favour of Fayette. The " verses were sent anonymously and in a disguised hand to the " General."

The words of the diary on the last day of the year shall terminate this chapter.

" Saturday, 31st.—Wrote twenty-seven verses, and at night " before I slept, I finished the Ἀνάβασις, which I had gone " through by reading, nights and mornings in bed (allowing but a " very few hours to sleep.) I consider the Ἀνάβασις of Xenophon " as a most admirable cordial to animate a spirit embarrassed by " any kind of trouble or vexation. The advantage and the delight " which I derived from this recent perusal of it, no words can " sufficiently express. In closing the last day of the first year " in which I have kept a regular diary, I reflect with much " satisfaction, on that highly useful little task. In my private " survey of the twelve months just elapsed, I have to regret " the inevitable loss of many hours, and many days; but I have " also to applaud myself for the resolution of searching into the " various real occasions of such loss; and for taking every possible " precaution to guard myself, as much as infirmities allow, against " all neglect or abuse of invaluable time.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER V.

STUDIES AND EVENTS IN THE YEAR, 1797.

EAGER as Hayley was to advance in several projected works of magnitude, his progress appears to have been greatly obstructed this year, by various sources of anxiety. On the fourth of January he composed a prayer for the recovery of his favourite Cowper, in the form of a sonnet, which he inserted in the life of Thomas Hayley, the young sculptor. That work contains, indeed, so many particulars relating to the poet, that in this memorial it will be sufficient briefly to notice his literary occupations, and the incidents that particularly affected him in the few years that he had yet to pass in the severest parental solicitude, till it pleased the great Disposer of all events, to take from him that filial idol of his heart, by a lingering and mistaken malady, angelically sustained. He seemed to think, and feel, that his own earthly existence would probably close very soon after the decease of his son; but as Heaven was graciously pleased to comfort and invigorate his heart and mind, for the prosecution of several literary performances, after that bitter and depressive loss, this narrative may properly expatiate on the latter years of the poet, and merely intimate such particulars concerning him, as may be found minutely recorded in the history he has written

Digitized by Google

of that interesting and affectionate youth, of whom he feelingly said, in the famous words of the Duke of Ormond, "I would not "exchange my dead son, for any living son in Christendom."

But it is time to recollect, that in the year of which we are now to speak, (1797,) the young sculptor was happily pursuing his studies under an inestimable master, and with a fair prospect of a long and prosperous career in art. His father had begun his extensive poem on sculpture with a lively hope of animating the pupil, and honouring his instructor. He appears to have been excited by the affectionate wishes of the young student to pursue his design "*con amore.*" He was, however, prevented from making a rapid progress, by various impediments. The subject required much extensive reading, as the notes to the poem were intended to comprise almost a history of ancient art, and translations of such poetical relics, both Greek and Latin, as any way related to the prime sculptors of antiquity. Interested as he was by the subject of his advancing work, and by his motives for attempting it, of which he spoke very feelingly, in closing his diary of January 1797, in the course of the following month he was tempted to suspend his work upon sculpture, and to resume a projected poem of a different kind. On his visit to France in 1790, his love of freedom, and his philanthropy, had filled his fancy with visionary hopes, that France, on the demolition of despotism, might gradually form a free constitution on the English model; and that the two nations, who for many centuries had lacerated each other with a barbarous and bloody rivalship, might convert their inveterate enmity into a nobler pacific

Digitized by Google

emulation, and only vie with each other in promoting the true interests of humanity.

Full of these benevolent, but visionary ideas, he had begun an extensive historical and moral poem, as a lesson to both countries.

Parts of this composition had been highly extolled by his confidential friends; but the subsequent atrocities of the French soon induced him to lay aside a composition that appeared no longer seasonable. His idea of resuming it, after having relinquished it for some years, is thus mentioned in his diary of February, 1797.

"Monday, 20th.—Meditated on the composition I ought to "pursue, if I am able to pursue any. Thinking, from the in-"finite popularity of Erskine's pamphlet against the war, that "the mind of England may take a new and juster direction, "I have thoughts of pursuing my poem on national hostility; "as there may be now a chance of its proving of some little use "to the interests of humanity, if Heaven will bless me with "health sufficient to render it a graceful, and energetic per-"formance. The attempt is worthy of a benevolent spirit."

The poet proceeded so far in his recent idea, as to introduce several new verses into the first part of this resumed poem, addressing it to his friend, the Bishop of Landaff, instead of the Marquis de la Fayette, with whom the author had dined at Paris, and whom he had originally invited, in the commence-

Digitized by Google

ment of this arduous task, to co-operate with him in consulting the true interest, honour, and happiness of their respective countries.

Irregular health and various avocations did not allow Hayley to make any great progress in his literary projects during the whole course of this year; yet it was a remarkable period of his life, for in April he laid the foundation of his new marine villa with his son, and their friends Romney and Bunce, the architect. Of this interesting structure so many particulars are related in the life of the young sculptor, that here it will be sufficient briefly to notice when it was founded, and when it was finished; observing, also, that the progress of the building proved a very pleasant and useful amusement, not only to the poet, but to his son, and to his friend Romney, as the health of those two beloved invalids became gradually a source of his greatest anxiety, and required infinitely more attention than his own.

In May, his solicitude, from observing appearances of declining health in the young sculptor, induced him to part with his little inmate, George Wyndham, whose education he had gratuitously engaged to superintend with the assistance of his young friend Thomas Sockett; and on this occasion he had the gratification of settling that deserving young man in the friendly palace of Petworth, as preceptor to the children of his noble neighbour, Lord Egremont.

Of this change in his household, he speaks in his diary of this month in the following words:

Digitized by Google

"Sunday 21.—Attended my young friends to Petworth; pleasing "conference with Lord K.; returned alone. Satisfied with my own "conduct, first in assuming, secondly in relinquishing at the end of "two years, the delicate charge of my amiable little friend George "Wyndham. Pleased with the prospect of being able to pursue my "own studies with undivided attention, if Heaven grants me health "enough to study. Still more pleased with being utterly unfettered, "for the sake of attending entirely to the health of my infinitely dear "young artist, if his health shall require much of my attention."

Hayley had indeed just grounds for self-approbation upon all his conduct in these occurrences: he was influenced by motives of compassion and tenderness, in first receiving the little Wyndham as his domestic disciple, because that promising boy had, like Hayley himself, suffered deplorably from illness at school, and expressed a most painful apprehension of returning to it. The poet of Eartham had much cordial gratification in making the early life of his little friend a season of cheerfulness and improvement, during the two years that they lived together; and in his resignation of so pleasing a charge, Hayley was actuated by a forcible *presentiment* of that incessant attention which it might be requisite for him to bestow on the declining health of his son. A tender precaution, too painfully justified by the subsequent illness of that beloved sufferer.

The poet was chiefly occupied during the summer and autumn, in nursing the two dear invalids, his old friend Romney and the young sculptor. His care of them was attended with considerable success. The subsequent November was rendered memorable by the illness and death of his pitiable Eliza. The unfortunate

Digitized by Google

circumstances relating to this lady were peculiar. From the unhappy state of her mother, she had not the inestimable advantage of maternal superintendence, and Dean Ball, though a man of talents and virtue, with great tenderness of heart, had too hasty a spirit to excel in educating a daughter; yet his hapless Eliza, distinguished by an innocent cheerfulness and infantine sensibility, improperly increased by the want of an intelligent and considerate guardian of her own sex, grew under the care of her father, a peculiarly interesting and lovely young woman. Her features were delicate, and expressive of sense, vivacity, and good nature; her hair light and beautiful, her complexion rosy. Her voice in speaking was musical; and although the acquisition of music was rather an irksome labour to her, yet, by the long attention, which from the continued advice and entreaty of her husband, both when they lived together and when they lived apart, she bestowed on the cultivation of her voice, she sang with great sweetness, and found in music a powerful resource against the petty evils of life. There were, however, in her marvellous organization, inscrutable sources of suffering, which rendered her occasionally one of the most truly pitiable mortals, that sympathetic humanity could wish to relieve. The truth of this remark may be illustrated perhaps by the following words, applied to her feelings by one of her most attentive medical friends. "Her whole frame is full of pins and needles; at every turn they run into her, and she imputes the blame to the first cause that occurs to her agitated fancy."

Yet subject as she continually was, to incurable sensations, that approached to agony, she had often a most lively and

Digitized by Google

unclouded enjoyment of literature and friendship. Her perception of mental excellence was rapid and strong, and the generosity of her spirit was unbounded.

Of the noble emotions of charity and devotion, she was duly susceptible. Many poor objects might attest the former; and the latter was very affectingly, though not ostentatiously, displayed in her mode of repeating the Lord's Prayer occasionally, during the course of her last illness. She seems not to have harboured an idea that her malady would prove fatal, yet her domestic conduct was as exemplary in several months preceding her decease, as if she had received the spiritual warning, "Put thy house in order for thou shalt surely die."

She had discharged her bills, she had arranged her infinite collection of manuscripts in the nicest order, and particularly the long series of letters that she had received from the poet, who, before he became her husband, had been the person most anxious to cultivate and adorn her very admirable and very singular mind, in the character of a brother, while he was attached to another lady, his first love, and her early and most intimate friend. The reader has seen in the former part of this memoir, that the attachment alluded to was dissolved, and that the poet was led into marriage with the fair and gentle, yet hapless, Eliza. The pity and esteem, however, which her husband felt towards her in the highest degree, might have preserved them from the painful necessity of separation; and the beneficent influence which he long exerted over her volatile and well-meaning spirit would have kept them united, had not that influence been impaired, first, by his severe ill health, and afterwards,

Digitized by Google

by the suggestions of misguided friends, which could have no tendency but to increase her unhappiness. It was a cordial satisfaction to her husband, that she had resided, during her latter days, in the metropolis, because in that scene she had the best medical assistance. It was also a comfort to his heart, that she was free from alarm and all mental inquietudes, through the whole course of the malady that ended her mortal existence.

There are three exquisite portraits of this lady, by two admirable artists, the intimate friends of her husband. The first by Meyer, in the year of her marriage; the two last, by Romney, at a more advanced period of life, but before her removal to Derby.

The poet attempted a tender and faithful delineation of her merits and misfortune, in the following verses intended for her monument:

EPITAPH ON ELIZA, THE FIRST WIFE OF WILLIAM HAYLEY.

If lovely features and a lofty mind—
Tender as charity, as bounty kind—
If these were blessings that to life could give
A lot which makes it happiness to live,
Thou, Eliza, hadst been blest on earth:
But Seraphs in compassion wept thy birth,
For thy deep nervous woes of wondrous weight,
Love could not heal, nor sympathy relate;
Yet pity trusts, with hallowed truth serene,
Thy God o'erpays them in a purer scene.
Peace to thy ashes, to thy memory love,
And to thy spirit in the realms above
All that from blameless sufferings below
Mortality can hope, or angels know.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

London: Printed by WILLIAM CLOWES, Northumberland-court.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY
REFERENCE DEPARTMENT

This book is under no circumstances to be taken from the Building

Form 410

Digitized by Google